

LIFE IN NORMANDY

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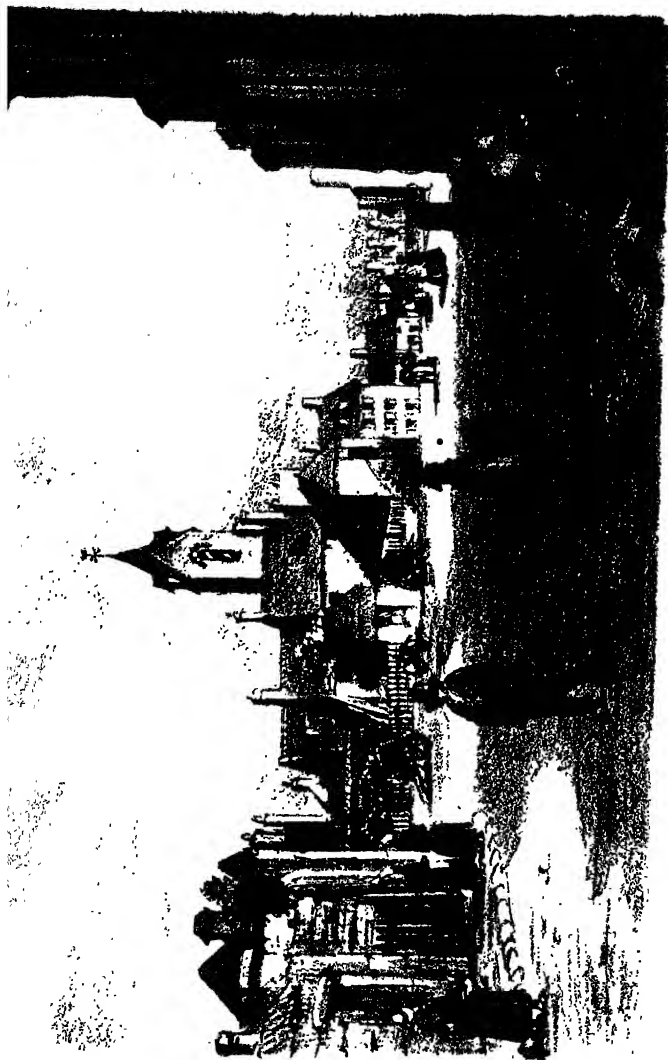
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LIFE IN NORMANDY

*SKETCHES OF FRENCH FISHING
FARMING, COOKING, NATURAL HISTORY
AND POLITICS
DRAWN FROM NATURE*



(VOL. I.)

EDINBURGH EDMONSTON & DOUGLAS

MDCCCLXIII

P R E F A C E.

THE following pages were written for pastime in 1848, by a Highland gentleman resident in Normandy, at the suggestion of an honoured friend, who named the subjects of French Cookery, Fishing, Natural History, Farming, Gardening, and Politics. It was suggested that ingenious foreign devices and engines for ensnaring, growing, and gathering food, and for making it eatable, might be so described as to benefit the poor at home, whose single dish of potatoes might easily be varied at small cost. It was argued that a good cheap dinner at home would tempt a poor man from bad dear drink abroad, and that a poor Scotchman's wife might be-taught to do that which poor wives do elsewhere. And, as even salmon when raw, are nasty,

while well cooked marrots, cuttle fish, limpets, frogs, snails, and maggots are eaten and relished, so instruction might be seasoned and made agreeable with sketches from life in Normandy, such as it then was.

The suggestions were taken, the papers were written and sent, and they are now published,—though both the author and his friend have passed away,—because it was their wish, and in the hope that the object which they aimed at may be attained.

“There are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it,” and many a barren Scotch strand might yield a good harvest, if men only knew how to reap it and use it.

In Hope and Cross, and their conversations about France and the French Revolution, it is easy to recognise the mind of the experienced, liberal, clear-sighted politician, who knew the meaning of political gratitude; who tolerated all forms of religious worship, though he steadfastly adhered to his own, at home and abroad; who could foresee that communism, disorder, and a French republic, would lead to well-defined rights of property, stricter order, and something like des-

potism ; and who held that the rigid system of protection, which placed a custom-house at the gate of every petty town, levied dues on every basket of eggs, and even planted sentries over sea water, to guard the salt monopoly, must give way to more liberal measures. The empire and the tariff of our day now prove the sagacity which predicted a change in the direction of monarchy and free trade.

Those who knew the writer need not be told his name. They will recognise the generosity whose chief luxury was to give pleasure to others, and the chivalry of the gentleman who was courteous to a bare-footed fisher-girl as to the highest in the land.

Those who knew provincial France some fourteen years ago, will recognise the country gentleman of old Norman and Breton type, who has so much in common with his Norse and British relations. They will know the warm, adventurous, hospitable, polite nature that still delights in love and war, danger and hardship ; in riding, sailing, shooting, fishing, country life, good living, and good fellowship ; and which in the olden time made vikings and gallant knights,

hospitable chiefs, good soldiers and minstrels, of Norseman and Norman, Celt and Saxon.

They will also recognise some characteristics of other classes.

If there be a shade of caricature, it is evenly applied to friend and foreigner, and there is no gall in the ink. "The Marquis" cooked a dinner;—but it was for his friends, and, if he ate his full share, he earned it by wading for it like a man.

Men, and their manners, and customs, are lightly sketched, but from nature, and on the spot:—the habits of animals are described from close observation by one who always delighted to watch them and catch them, without caring much for their long book-names or for learned theories.

The lithographs are copied from rough sketches made on the spot, and if the volumes do no more, they may at least serve to amuse the reader, and perhaps remind him of an old friend.

EDINBURGH, *December* 1862.

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CHAPTER I.

FÊTE-DIEU, JUNE 1848.

“DREADFUL NEWS!” exclaimed François, a French lad about seventeen years of age, as he rushed into his master’s room.

Mr. Cross, the said master, was a Scotch gentleman who had lived for some years in France. He had originally come to the country for the health of a sister, but she having died at Nice, he left the south, and since that time he had resided in various northern provinces ; latterly he had established himself in Normandy, where everything was cheap, and everybody poor. A poor man, therefore, could not be looked down upon for being in the same position as his neighbours ; indeed, poverty in England being wealth in Normandy, Mr. Cross, with a small independence, found himself the great man of the quiet little town where he lived.

François, his servant, had been taken, when a boy, from the Foundling Hospital ; he had served at first as the piper’s man’s wee laddy used to serve in a Highland

establishment—that is to say, he did everybody's work, both in the house and out of it, as well as his own, and thereby acquired a universal knowledge of household operations. The cook made him learn and execute all her duties, beginning by shelling peas, and ending by looking after her stews and côtelettes, while she flirted with the gardener, or wasted her time by talking for ten ordinary women on market days. The housemaid made him wax and *frotter* the floors, dust the rooms, and occasionally make the beds; and if he ever had a spare moment, the gardener was sure to find him employment in watering, weeding, or arranging the flowers. He had been engaged to assist Mr. Thomas, an old and faithful servant, who had been many years the attendant both of Mr. Cross and his father. François' own duties were therefore to clean lamps, shoes, and knives, and to carry water from the well; water-pipes and pumps being an unknown luxury in that part of France. Thomas, though faithful, was old; François was young and clever; and he soon learnt to clean plate and brush clothes so well, that the faithful Thomas, after a while, only watched to see that his master's comforts and interests were not neglected or injured by the mal-performance of his young assistant. Under such schooling, it is not surprising that François learnt to be a good

servant, with a very general knowledge of all the branches of household work. The boy had the national gaiety of his countrymen. Early broke in to hard and constant labour, he avoided their great faults, idleness and frivolity ; taken from the Foundling Hospital to this new routine of duty, constant employment was to him a change for the better ; for he was well fed, well clothed, and had a comfortable bed to sleep on—comforts unknown before, and so much prized that he was always cheerful. In passing through a French town, therefore, let no one feel shocked at seeing a string of two or three hundred children, all foundlings, marching through the streets ; let him forget that the Foundling Hospital bears the stamp of giving facility to immorality, and rather suppose that it is a useful national seminary for providing good domestic servants for those who may require them ; and in this he will not be disappointed, provided he takes them young enough, before their spirits are broken and soured by ill treatment. Six months before the time we mention, poor old Thomas had been gathered to his fathers. François, being promoted to his place, would no longer submit to do the work of the whole household ; the consequence of which was, that a meeting took place which obliged Mr. Cross to have a general clearance. After this he found that he

was better served by François, the old woman, who was both cook and housemaid, and a man once a week in the garden, than when he had the larger establishment under old Thomas, who, though honesty personified, was an Englishman, and therefore no match for the clever roguery of the Normans. Such was the state of Mr. Cross's household, when François burst into his room, announcing that there was dreadful news from Paris !

Mr. Cross sat up in bed and rubbed his eyes, not much frightened by the intelligence. He was accustomed to hear the superlative degree applied to all sorts of news ; he had heard it on the 23d of February, and in May, when it was used in all the extremes of horror ; and before either of these two eventful months he had listened to the same amount of hyperbolical exaltation, when the news of the capture of Abd-el-Kader had arrived in France. It was therefore in a very quiet tone that he inquired what was the matter .

"There is an émeute in Paris ! the streets are barricaded, the troops and the people are fighting, and thousands of people and soldiers have been killed ! is not that affreux ?" exclaimed the lad.

"Bad enough," said his master, "if it be true. And where, pray, did you hear this fine story ?"

“I was going, as monsieur had ordered, to the tailor’s, and I met Philippe, who was with me in the hospital, and who is now in the printing office of the Gazette, and he told me that he had seen the telegraphic despatch which was just sent in to be printed. I heard the drum going through the streets as I returned, so it must be true.”

“It looks as if it were. So give me my clothes and hot water : I will get up and go and see for myself.”

The news was true enough, and for the next two days rumours were afloat at every moment. The faces of the English residents looked long, and flight was the universal theme of conversation. The third day was Sunday, and the little English chapel was full : fear is a great promoter of devotion. The service was over, and the clergyman had given out his text, when the loud sound of drums beating the *générale* was heard below the windows. The congregation became fidgety, the parson preached in vain ; indeed, Cross afterwards declared that he saw him turn over two pages of his sermon at a time, and no one found him out, nor did he correct his mistake, for he, honest man, as well as his non-hearers, was more taken up with the *émeutes* in the streets than the pious emotions of the heart. His sermon was uncommonly short, and the rush from the chapel when he concluded

was so rapid as to be barely decent. Once at the door the movements became more decorous, for as it rained, servants were in waiting with umbrellas, and from them it was learnt that a number of the National Guards were about to march for Paris to assist the Government in restoring order. Most of the ladies walked quietly home, but many of the gentlemen went to the Place Vallhubert to see the muster. The crowd there was very great; almost all the National Guards were under arms and drawn up, although only a part had volunteered to march to Paris. Among these were, however, almost all the principal gentlemen of the place. They were a motley crew; few had uniforms, and the rest had dressed themselves in clothes to stand the weather. Shooting-jackets preponderated, nevertheless they were a serviceable-looking body of men, and they looked well and gay. Under the eyes of men who valued them as protectors of order, and of women who admired their courage, it would have been impossible for a Frenchman even to look anxious.

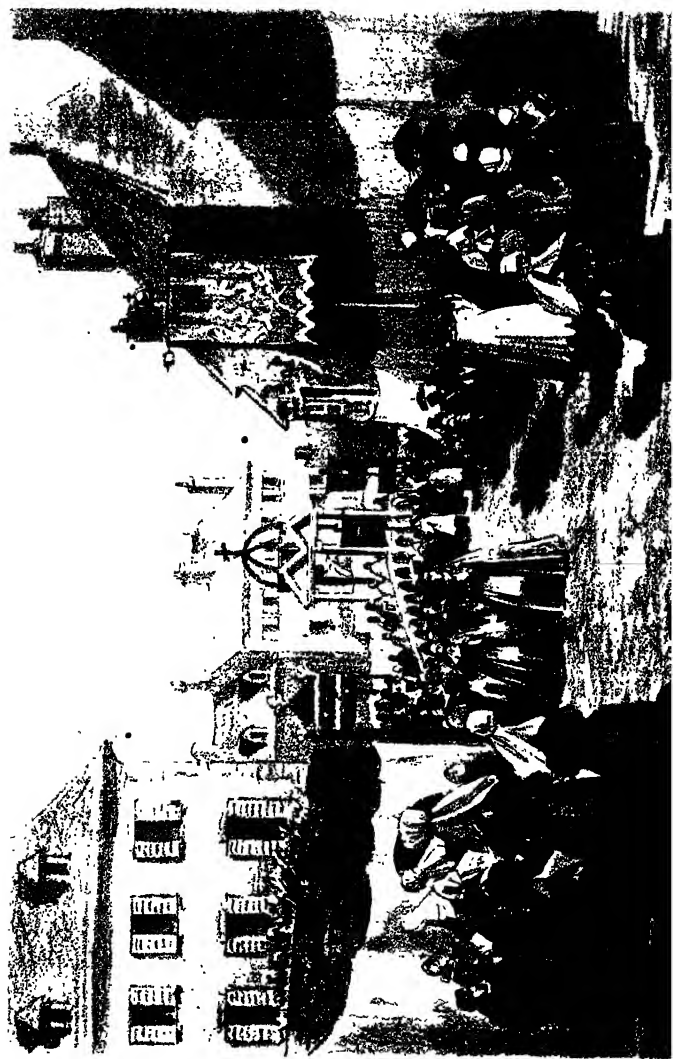
Nothing can be done in France without a little theatrical display. In France they have rather too much of it, in England certainly too little. The French error is the best, for every man, whether he allows it or not, loves in his heart to have his services appreciated, and

the bravest will not meet death less bravely if fair faces and bright eyes have cheered him on his path, and may weep for him if he falls.

Following the usual custom, the volunteers were marched round the Place that every one might see them. Then they formed a hollow square ; the tricolor was blessed and handed to the officer ; speeches were made by the authorities, ending of course with "be brave, be Frenchmen ;" and then they were re-formed and marched off, the band playing "Mourir pour la patrie." The whole National Guard followed, together with half the inhabitants of the town, who marched the first mile with them towards Paris, only leaving them when they mounted into the long waggons which had been ordered to await them on the road. "Soyez braves, soyez Français," were the concluding words which had been addressed to the soldiers by the authorities ; "Soyez braves, soyez Français," were the first which were applied by the coachmen to their horses as they started at a trot ; but the latter added, "Allez toujours, Br-r-r-igands," with a dose of whip—which addition the French quadrupeds bore in a manner that shewed they were used to it.

The rain had ceased, and the sun was bursting forth as the large escort turned to regain the town. When

the concourse reached the Place where the military had so lately been mustered the scene was greatly changed, for the sunbeams glittered not on musket barrels, but on the vestments of a procession of priests. These vestments shone in all the splendour of gold and silver brocade. In front were borne high in air the embroidered banners, long waxen torches, and the silver cross. A band of choristers came next, marching on either side of the street, the centre of which was filled by little girls dressed as angels, having garlands on their heads and baskets of flowers in their hands. The flowers they scattered from time to time in front of a canopy which followed. The canopy was covered with embroidery and silver lace ; it was carried by four priests in splendid dresses, and beneath it walked an old man similarly dressed, and bearing the consecrated Host in his hands. Immediately in front of the canopy, and on either side, marched a number of boys waving censers of incense. These were of silver, and they glittered brightly while they gave forth their fragrant smoke as they were tossed in the air by their bearers. All were thus thrown at the same moment, time being kept by a man dressed in black and white robes, with a high square cap on his head, who gave the signal and the time to both choristers and incense-boys, by opening and shutting a box made



in the form of a book. Every time it shut it made a hollow sound, which could be heard at a good distance. More priests followed; then a troop of *Sœurs de Charité* and *Bonne Sœurs*, and behind them a crowd of women. Among these could be seen a few old men, but not one young one—devotion being decidedly not the fashion among the young men in France. Still, on joining the procession, the crowd paused and uncovered, to allow it to move on, but took advantage of every cross street to escape to their homes.

On entering the streets, Cross saw that from one end to the other they were hung with white sheets. Here and there those in front of a house might be seen with a broad black edging sewn round, to mark that the inhabitants of that house had lost a relative and were in mourning.

“What ceremony is this?” asked Cross of an old man. “*Sacré hérétique*” was the only answer which the old rascal condescended to give. Cross knew him to be a drunken vagabond, who kept a cabaret and let out horses and carriages for hire. He was somewhat astonished at hearing this burst of Catholic zeal from such a quarter, for he did not know that about a month before, this venerable good-for-nothing had been upset when returning home drunk, and had been nearly killed.

When confined to his bed, his wife had thought it a good opportunity to administer a little spiritual consolation. Her priest was sent for, he had been properly lectured, and as a sign of his reformation, he was ordered out to carry a candle and march in the rear of the procession.

“ The devil was sick, the devil a saint would be,
The devil got well, the devil a saint was he ”—

held good in this instance, for the same evening Cross saw his pious friend sitting in front of his own door as drunk as a Norman, and swearing at his wife as loudly as ever.

Though Cross could get no answer from this worthy, one of the Sœurs de Charité lifted her head and answered—

“ It is one of the great ceremonies of our Church, my good gentleman—to-day is the Fête-Dieu.”

Cross recognised in the soft voice and sweet expression of the Sœur de Charité a person who had called on him some time before to request a donation for the society to which she belonged. Knowing the great good which they did, admiring the truly Christian feeling of these women, who are ready to nurse all who are sick or in affliction, Cross had given her a handsome donation. She answered his question sweetly and gently ; there was no tone of reproof in her voice ; true



an angel

to what she believed to be right, she could still respect the belief of another. "What a difference," thought Cross, "exists between that drunken old sinner and this mild Christian woman,—as great as the difference I have just seen between the two parties who have so lately been on this spot. Prayers and hymns now sound here instead of drums, trumpets, and rude oaths ; and the smell of incense fills the air in place of the sulphurous odour of gunpowder that pervaded the atmosphere less than an hour ago."

Though Cross had been several years in France, it so happened that he had never witnessed the ceremony of the Fête-Dieu. One year he had been ill himself ; on another he had been confined by the illness of his sister ; on a third by her death. He therefore resolved to follow the procession now ; and respect for the Sisters of Charity made him do so with less inclination to find fault with what seemed to him a mummary.

On advancing into the town they came to a shop the front of which had been taken out. The interior was dressed with an altar, on which stood candelabras, numerous lights, and flowers in quantities, both real and artificial, and a crucifix. The whole interior of the room was adorned with moss, evergreens, and garlands of flowers, arranged with great taste.

Here the procession stopped ; the priest lifted the canopy and entered the chapel, bearing in his hand the Host, and followed by a number of his brother clergy. Prayers were said and sung, and then the large collection of nosegays lying before him was blessed. One after another they were lifted from the altar, each was pressed on the gilded case in which the sacrament was carried, and then laid down again, to be claimed by the parties who had left them there.

Cross looked at the Sisters of Charity. "The Lord forgive me," he said to himself, "if I am unjust ; but this is awful nonsense. Can any rational being believe that this mummary gives any value to these flowers ? and yet what right have I to find fault with their absurdities, and forget that the same faith which places value on withered flowers because they have been blessed by a priest, leads these excellent women to sacrifice every hour of their lives to works of love and charity !"

The ceremony ended at this Reposoir, the procession again moved on for a couple of hundred yards, till they came to a place where four streets met. Here a chapel was raised in the middle of the open space. It was beautifully made of white linen, moss, and evergreens, twisted into pillars, with a roof of laurel leaves that looked like scales. Within again was an altar

surrounded with rare plants in pots, and covered, like the first, with garlands, lights, bouquets, and a cross. The same ceremonies took place—the only alteration being, that a number of pretty little girls scattered flowers before the priest as he ascended the steps of the altar, and two others held china vases in their hands, from which a stream of fragrant smoke issued. These stood at the bottom of the altar steps, and there remained while the service was chanted. When this was ended, Cross thought he had seen enough, and as the procession began to move, he slipped into one of the side streets to take his way homewards. When, however, he entered the main street that led towards his house, he was surprised to see that a number of Reposoirs had been raised at short intervals along the whole length of the street. He could not help stopping to examine and admire these structures, for the ingenuity and taste displayed in the arrangement of very simple materials was quite extraordinary. A number of young women and girls were employed in giving the finishing touches to the works, and some stood with a lantern and taper ready to light the candles at a moment's notice. Several young men were looking on, but doing nothing.

“By whom are all these made?” asked Cross of a

young Frenchman whom he saw standing among the spectators.

“You may see,” he answered ; “all the young girls in the country have been at work preparing for to-day. They have been employed for some weeks to make what will be seen for only a few hours ; but they work with pleasure, for not one of them fails to believe that, according to the work they do, so is their prospect of getting a husband increased ; and if they do not work, they are firmly convinced they have no chance of being married for a year.”

“That explains what puzzled me much,” said Cross ; “for many a hand and many an hour must be required to arrange those various-coloured mosses in such elegant patterns. But who makes all the wood-work ?”

“That,” replied the Frenchman, “is made once for all. When taken down this evening it will be laid aside till next year ; the boards and posts will be placed in the neighbouring houses, and will be covered with some fresh device this time twelve months.”

Cross bowed, thanked his informant, and proceeded home. In the evening, when he came out to stroll through the streets, not a vestige remained of any of the chapels or altars. The scene was again changed ; groups of men in blouses were walking ; some few sing-

ing the Marseillaise, but most of them looking anxious; gentlemen were standing at the corners of the streets conversing, and a considerable crowd was collected watching the telegraph, whose arms were working, conveying and receiving some fresh intelligence from Paris. Presently a shout was heard from the end of the street, and all hastened to learn the cause: it was a long line of waggon^s and carriages laden with National Guards, who were hastening to Paris from four of the more southern towns to lend their aid to the cause of order. Cross narrowly observed the faces and actions of the crowd which was pouring in from every side to see them pass, and the examination was satisfactory, for the approbation and pleasure displayed proved that communism was at a discount in Normandy, and that the discontented in one city, large though it was, must yield to the will of the nation.

During the next two or three days, great anxiety was felt and expressed regarding the volunteers who had marched for Paris; the telegraph and such newspapers as were printed, reported that order was restored, but private letters arrived from Paris stating that several assassinations had taken place, and that some of the National Guards from the country had been shot while on duty. These anxieties, however, did not last

long, for most of those who had gone wrote to announce their safe arrival. Many of these letters—those at least which were written to male friends—were read aloud, and were found to contain much more ample details of the ridiculous misadventures of the writers and their companions, than of the horrors which they had gone to witness and suppress ; but, by degrees, all that had taken place was made known, either by the public prints or private letters. Then people began to breathe more freely and to talk loudly in behalf of order and against the domination of the refuse of France, who thought proper to ruin their country by raising émeutes in the capital. Grapeshot, gunpowder, and wholesale extermination of these miscreants, poured from the mouths of all who had anything to lose, and not a few talked of the propriety of marching *en masse* to Paris to destroy the hornets' nest by burning it to the ground, as the only means of restoring peace to France.

A few days more passed, and matters became quieter, and then the news arrived that the services of the National Guard from the country could be dispensed with, and that the volunteers were to be dismissed and return to their homes. The town was in great commotion on receipt of this intelligence. Their friends were to arrive the following day, and it was unanimously resolved

that they should have a public reception ; accordingly, on the following morning all was bustle. At one o'clock the National Guard who had remained at home, the artillery company with their guns, and the fire brigade, mustered in the Place Valhubert, and from thence marched with bands of music to Pont, to receive their friends on the spot where they had taken leave of them so short a time before. Short as that time had been, great was the change in the minds of those who now went to welcome their townsmen. When they had gone to bid them adieu, depression and anxiety were on the countenances of all, but now they bore a triumphant look ; the cause of order was in the ascendant ; their lives and (what a Norman values more) their *livres* were safe ; they considered the volunteers to be heroes, who had assisted in this good work ; for they felt, and justly felt, that although few of the country National Guards had actually been engaged, yet the moral impression given by their march to the capital had done as much for the establishment of order as the more bloody deeds of those who actually fought at the barricades. All eyes were therefore bright ; all hearts were gay, and the military music sounded merrily as they marched down the hill. And on this hill was many a fair face, and many an aged form. The young came

to meet lover, brother, or husband; the old to catch the first glimpse of a son's form, and to contend with the young for the first glance of his eye. Mingled with the better class were hundreds of the peasant women, dressed in their high white caps and gaudy-coloured handkerchiefs. They gave a striking effect to the edge of the steep hill on which they were grouped; and behind them were mustered masses of the farmers and peasants, dressed in their blue blouses. No young men of the upper classes were there, for they were in the ranks, which had just left the town; but a few old gentlemen stood near the ladies, like them watching for the return of a son or a relative.

From the height where all were thus assembled the village of Pont could be clearly seen. Every eye was turned in that direction, and at length a universal buzz and clapping of hands gave notice that the flag was hoisted, to intimate that the comers were in sight at Pont. Two minutes after, a shout told that they were in sight from the hill. The shout, for a French one, was good; but, after all, it was but a poor concern. There is nothing that strikes the ear of an Englishman more forcibly than the difference between the cheers of a British and a French crowd. The cheer of the French is a sort of irregular roar, and sounds tame in comparison

with an English cheer ; but to make up for this deficiency, the French beat the English hollow in their cries of anger. The shout of an angry British mob resembles the roar of a bull, while that of a French one is like the scream of demons let loose. No one was angry on this occasion ; all were pleased and highly excited, for the cheers of the men were unusually good, and the women pressed forward to the very edge of the road, waving their handkerchiefs to the still distant party. A quarter of an hour elapsed, which seemed like an age to the watchers ; then came the waggons in which the troops had travelled ; and the drivers, having no enemy to beat, as a matter of course beat their horses. After the waggons there was a pause for a minute, and then the band turned the corner, playing right heartily ; but the sound of their instruments was drowned in the roar of a salute from the cannon at the top of the hill. In a few seconds the band had passed, and then the heroes of the day were close to the anxious gazers. First came six of the Garde Mobile of Paris ; they were natives of the town, who had distinguished themselves in the contests in the streets, and had received ten days' leave of absence to conduct their townsmen to their homes. They were all mere lads, but they had fought, and fought well. One, in particular, had greatly distin-

guished himself. A year before, he had been the ill-used apprentice of a hair-dresser, from whom he had run away ; he was now returning, hailed as a hero, with a laurel wreath hanging from his bayonet. All the muskets of the Garde Mobile were thus adorned with wreaths, while those of the volunteers had a nosegay and a branch of laurel stuck in their barrels. All these passed rapidly by, having barely time to return a glance or a nod to the vivas and waving of handkerchiefs of their fair friends. Behind them followed the rest of the local troops, and then came the rush of the crowd to get a place in the Place Vallubert, where the volunteers were to be mustered and addressed before being dismissed.

Such an opportunity for a little theatrical display was not likely to be lost by the officials. It was done, and well done ; for there are no people in the world who do this better than the French. The people were paraded and praised in a neatly-turned speech by one ; they were re-praised and re-paraded by a second ; and a third received back their flag, and gave them yet another laudatory oration, and then they were dismissed ; and though, to our colder natures, so much parade and praise may look like braggadocio and nonsense, it is well judged in France ; for, once dismissed, the embracing was

endless. There was not a gamin in the streets, when he saw the laurel wreaths, that did not wish to enlist in the Garde Mobile ; nor a single National Guard who was not ready to march to the devil, instead of to Paris, in the hope of being so paraded, so praised, and so kissed on his return. As for the Garde Mobile, their only difficulty was how to meet the innumerable invitations that poured on them from every side. Poor boys ! if they could march to Paris, it was more than they could do to go to bed. Some slept where they supped ; others were carried shoulder high to their quarters by men not much more sober than themselves ; thus making another escape for their lives, seeing that it is a question which was the greater danger, a shot from an insurgent in Paris, or a fall on the pavement from the shoulders of their friends at home.

The morning after their arrival came an order for a funeral mass in all the churches in France, which was to be celebrated in honour of those who had fallen in defence of the government. This order was proclaimed through the streets by the drum. The day following, Cross's servant brought him a scrap of paper, which looked very like the little dirty butcher's bills which were weekly laid on his table ; but on examination it proved to be an invitation to attend the funeral proces-

sion and service ; the parties to 'meet at the préfecture, and march in form to the church of St. Gervais, where the ceremony of the funeral mass was to be celebrated. Never having seen anything of the sort, Cross hastened to don a suit of black, stuck a sprig of cypress in his button-hole, and walked off to the place of meeting.

At the door he was met by the dignitaries, dressed in black and wearing scarfs of tricoloured silk either over the shoulder or round the waist. It is wonderful what a number of office-bearers there are in every French town ; all were now mustered in 'full fig, and to each a bow must be given. In the large room another party of officials met him ; these were the professors of the college, with gowns and square black caps. The trencher caps of our own collegiate dignitaries are so odd in the eyes of foreigners, that we have no right to laugh at similar oddities on the heads of the learned in other lands. The inside of the heads of these teachers of youth are so well garnished, we presume, that the outside must be absurdly clothed to mark the difference. More bows, of course, were made to each of these, and it was no easy task to go through them, for, like the civic officials, there seemed to be a preposterous number of professors in proportion to the number of scholars to be taught. Behind the professors were ranged the invited

guests, but *liberté* and *égalité* were evident, for there stood, side by side, the ancient nobles of the land with the butchers, bakers, and grocers of the town. More bows still, and when Cross's neck was half broken by such constant bending he at last drew up against the wall to watch the arrival of any other guest. Punctuality is not a French virtue; if so, it was not now practised, for it was after waiting a full hour past the appointed time that the sound of a military band was heard. Immediately afterwards the National Guard marched into view and drew up in front of the door.

A roll of drums gave notice that all was ready. The officials marched off, beginning with the *sous-préfet* and ending with a junior professor; the guests followed as they could; the band struck up "*Mourir pour la patrie*;" the cortège moved off, and Cross found himself, with two or three of his countrymen, walking behind the butchers and bakers of the town.

"When we invite foreigners to attend our public ceremonies," said an old general officer to Cross, "we always offer them some place of distinction; but I suppose they mean this as a compliment, we have seen their backs in action and they are giving us another sight of them."

Cross laughed; he did think that, for a nation which

pretends to be the most polite¹ in the world, it was somewhat odd to allow strangers to be jostled by the riff raff of the town.

The old General having vented his spleen, recovered his good humour and marched on, but his equanimity was again rather disturbed when, on entering the church, he found that no seats had been reserved. Every one was seated, except the half dozen English gentlemen who had been invited. After a while a lady made room in her pew for the General; the rest of the English were obliged to stand, and, as the church was tremendously crowded, and the day intensely hot, this was no joke. Cross was interested in watching the ceremony, and did not therefore so much care for the fatigue, as by standing he had a better opportunity of seeing what was going on.

The first entry into the church was striking to any one who witnessed such a ceremony for the first time. Seats having been reserved near the altar for the dignitaries, the band, and for all the invited guests, except the English, every other corner of the church was crammed with females, among whom might be remarked about a dozen of *old* men. The priests and choristers stood in front, close round the altar, all dressed in their glittering costumes; a little further off were

fringed the boys in white and black dresses, each holding a silver incense-vessel in his hand. The walls round the altar were hung with black festoons, and on it burnt a number of tall wax tapers, and close to the railing stood two highly-gilt antique reading-desks, with large folios open upon them.

As the procession entered the church, the band ceased to play, and the drums struck up a rōw-dōw, rōw-dōw-dōw, all striking at the same moment. The noise on entering the vaulted roof of the church was deafening. They marched on, two and two, opening out into single file as they passed the bier which stood in the centre of the aisle, and joining again when they had passed it. On reaching the altar they filed off to the right and left, and formed lines behind the incense boys, continuing to beat the same rōw—dōw—rōw-dōw-dōw, till the aisles were completely filled by the National Guards. They then gave a roll that made noise enough to bring down the roof of the church, had it not been built of solid materials, and the service began. The first part was impressive, for the beautiful music of the Roman Catholic service, with the sight of so many women seemingly rapt in devotion, must strike every feeling mind with serious thoughts, and Cross, though bred in a simpler and very different form of worship, felt that just

respect for the belief of others which he claimed for himself. As the service advanced, however, two or three circumstances occurred which rather shocked his Calvinistic ideas of propriety. At two or three different periods during the service, the band struck up in full chorus. At first they confined themselves to playing bits from various operas, but afterwards they played waltzes and polkas ; and during this most dancing music one priest was still reading at the desk, two or three more were bowing low from time to time and walking around and across the reader and the altar. This struck him considerably, but he felt still more astonished when the period arrived for the elevation of the Host. The bell rang first, then resounded the voice of the colonel giving the word of command ; all the soldiers presented arms and knelt on one knee, while the drums struck up a most deafening roll. When the sacrament was taken the drums ceased, the voice of the colonel was again heard, and the soldiers resumed their places. A great number of candles that surrounded the bier were then lit, the priests approached, some prayers were chanted, and the service was over. The dignitaries left their places and again led the way from the church as they had entered it, followed by the same guests. They re-formed in the front of the church, the sous-préfet at the head,

to conclude the ceremony by once more marching in procession through the streets.

“Hang their humbug,” said the old General to Cross, “I have had enough of this ; suppose you and I fall out of the ranks and cut them. Keep this side of the street ; we will pop down the first lane and be off.”

“With all my heart,” answered Cross ; “for, to own the truth, I am nearly done up by standing so long in such awful heat.”

“You may say that,” said the General ; “and if a young fellow like you feels it so much, you may judge how I would have suffered if that worthy lady had not made room for me. But here is a fine narrow lane, so give me your arm, and we will cut the concern.”

Cross gave his arm, and they entered the narrow lane as the General had proposed ; it was in shade, and when once fairly entered on, they paused to enjoy the refreshing coolness.

“I say, Cross,” said the General, “you have been in Italy as well as myself. These Frenchmen do not manage matters so well as the Italians. In Italy, though I thought them a set of blockheads to believe in saints and relics, yet I never went into their churches that I did not feel a respect for them ; but faith, here, with their drums and trumpets, I feel no respect for either

priests or people ; and the young men seem to care as little for their priests as I do, for there was not one young fellow present except those who were obliged to be there on duty."

"I agree with you, General, in thinking that there is far greater solemnity and decorum in the church service as it is performed in Italy ; but we have no right to judge by what we have seen to-day ; neither you nor I have ever seen a public military funeral in Italy, and therefore we cannot draw a comparison. As for your critique on the absence of young men, I have made the same remark before. I have frequently gone into the churches to hear the music at high mass, and have always been struck by never seeing any of the young men of the better class at church. You will see a number of the elderly peasants and a small sprinkling of the young ones, but never since I have been in this country have I seen a young man in society at church. If they do go at all, it must be very early in the morning, or late at night, for I have never seen them there."

Thus talking, they had resumed their walk. Strolling gently down the lane, they had now reached the end where it opened into the market-place. The sun was striking hot and bright into the open space, and they paused again, disliking to face the heat. In front of

them sat a group of the peasant women in their high caps ; before each was a table on which were spread fruits of various sorts, and beside them were ranged baskets containing vegetables. Each woman held over her head a large red umbrella which shaded herself and her goods from the force of the sun's rays ; but the light passing through the umbrella gave colour to the shade it afforded, tinting cap, table, fruit, and baskets, with varied shades of red.

“That is very picturesque,” said Cross ; “I wish I was a painter ! what a picture might be made of what is now before us ; the grouping is so good, and the colouring so rich, both in brilliancy and shade.”

“You don't surely call those caps pretty ?” exclaimed the General.

“Not pretty, certainly,” replied Cross, “but yet I think them picturesque. Individually, I agree in thinking them frightful, but in groups, those high white cones make beautiful lines ; and ugly as we may consider them, they have stood a good long test, more especially in a country where the fashion of dress is so often changed. You will see this same cap cut on the oldest tomb-stones ; and we know that the wife and ladies of the court of William the Conqueror were thus bedecked, and the Icelandic cap has much the same form as some

of these. But you need not fix your eyes entirely on the Norman cap ; there is a group of prettier and quieter head-gears from other parts of the country now crossing the market-place ; and if you look to the left, you may see that line of Granville caps which the fish-women wear. The reflection of the red umbrellas on their white turban-like head-dresses is quite oriental ; they, at all events, have the double charm of being individually pretty and highly picturesque. And see, there is certainly a countryman of ours who is admiring either the women or their wares, for he has been standing staring at them since we have been here. He is a new-comer, I think, nay, now I am certain, for I see the mark by which to recognize a fresh-arrived Johnny Bull ; don't you see he has a Murray under his arm ? Suppose we go and reconnoitre him, and, at the same time, see what fish remains unsold."

"By all means," said the General ; and they proceeded towards that part of the market appropriated to the sale of fish. The stalls were almost cleared, but large slices of skate were still hanging over the sides of small tubs ; a few fresh-water fish and some red gurnet were lying on the tables, and baskets of cockles and oysters were standing on the ground. When they came near the stall by which the stranger was standing, they saw that

on that table lay a salmon of about fourteen pounds weight, and the owner was undergoing a cross-examination from the Englishman as to where it was caught, and when. The stranger turned when they were close to him, Cross sprung forward, and as he seized his hand, exclamations of recognition and pleasure at meeting were exchanged. The General took his leave, but before he went, Cross introduced the stranger as "my old friend, Mr. Hope." When the General was gone, a volley of questions followed from Cross.

"I am so glad to see you, my dear fellow, and the pleasure is so unexpected. When did you come? where did you come from? where are you staying? and what the deuce brought you here?"

"I may return the compliment," answered Hope, "and say truly, I am right glad to see you; and then for your questions—I will answer them *seriatim*. I came last night; I come from Paris; I am staying at the inn hard by; and I have come here because I saw the name of this town on a large placard at the Diligence Office, with an intimation that I could come here in twenty-six hours, on payment of a certain number of francs, and here I am. Now I must ask you one question in return: Are you settled here?"

Cross answered in the affirmative.

“Then that decides me,” said Hope; “I too will stay. The sight of that salmon had nearly determined me to do so; but now my mind is quite made up, for it cannot be a bad place where a man may catch a salmon now and then, and have an old friend to talk to. However, we can talk of our friends and ourselves by-and-by. In the meantime I must hear a little more about this salmon, for I never expected to see such a short thick fish in France. A fellow like that would give sport on a line.”

“This one I suspect had no such chance,” replied Cross, “but has been caught in the stake-nets. Salmon, however, are often taken in the rivers with the fly. There are two streams close to this town, but I have very seldom heard of the salmon rising in the warm weather. Early in the season they take very well. Just now you must content yourself with fishing for smaller fry. Trout, large dace, chub, and bleak, may all be taken with the fly a few miles up the river; and if you choose to condescend to bait-fishing you may lie on the grass and pull out by the dozen the finest gudgeons I ever saw.”

“That will do for me,” said Hope, “for I am quite contented to catch any fish and in any way. I have met men who were such epicures in fishing that they



considered it a degradation to fish for anything but salmon. For my part I can sit in a punt and rake for gudgeons when nothing better offers. The only difference is, that when I take to a punt on the Thames I like to have a paper of sandwiches or a pie, with a bottle of wine and some iced soda-water for companions. When I fish for salmon, I only insist on a small flask of whisky or brandy in my pocket to strengthen my inward man, and drink a pleasant boiling to my captives."

"If that is your feeling," said Cross, "you may do very well here, for you may have your creature comforts on the grass as well as in a punt, with this additional gratification, that you can drink your bottle of champagne for half-a-crown instead of half-a-guinea, and if you are bent on higher game, half a day will take you into Brittany, where the fishing is really good, and you may drink your brandy and pay for it with sous instead of shillings."

"Bravo!" answered Hope, "I always thought you a pleasant fellow, but you have risen a hundred per cent in my estimation, for, to tell you the truth, I was a little low. Driven out of Paris, and too poor to live in London, I was thrown on my back; but you have set me on my legs so well, that when I have eaten a bit of that salmon, Cæsar will be himself again!"

“Well, then,” said Cross, “you shall eat it with me. I will buy the half of it, and shew you where and how I get on here, and you, in return, shall tell me all your news. Fresh from Paris ; you must have much to tell if you were there during all these late horrors.”

“In truth, you may well call them horrors. But I shall require some dinner, and a glass of wine, before we speak of them. Let us stick to salmon and fish just now ; we will not talk of Paris till the evening. First let us get a bit of this fish, then you shall shew me your quarters, and help me to find some for myself, for those I now inhabit are not very clean or comfortable, and I don’t like bagmen, above all, French bagmen, for my companions at table. Such a set of ruffians as I met at the table-d’hôte breakfast this morning, reminded me too strongly of the fellows I saw grinning over the barricades, to be pleasant.”

“I shall be delighted to help you,” said Cross. “I will buy the fish, and we must have a few oysters and cockles for sauce, as there is no chance of getting a lobster to-day.”

“Oysters in June !” exclaimed Hope ; “did any one ever hear of such an idea ? Have they no close time here ?”

“I don’t think they have,” said Cross, “for you always see oysters every market-day throughout the

year, and I eat them as others do, and find them very good. I suspect that those which are now sold are what are cast up by the tide. The women call them *Gîte de marée*, which I do not understand, unless it is a corruption of *Huîtres de marée*—oysters of the tide. These may be fish that do not breed, and therefore remain good when others are out of season, for the fishermen do not dredge for them during the summer months, yet the markets are always well supplied with those which the girls collect at low tide on the sands, and, as I tell you, I have always found them very eatable."

"That is an advantage," said Hope, "they have here over us in England, and I shall be glad to try them, for an oyster is always a good thing. As you have invited me to dinner, you must let me send you your dish of fish."

"No, no, my good fellow," said Cross, "I am too good a patriot to allow a new comer to buy anything in a Norman market till he knows a little more of the people; why, if you were to try and deal with that old lady you would raise the market for the next six weeks, by giving her what she asked, and thus get yourself into a scrape with me and the rest of your countrymen. So, you must e'en condescend to eat your fish, as well as the rest of your dinner, at my expense to-day."

"As you will," replied Hope; "I remember you

always liked to have your own way, so I will not interfere. Provided I have a bit of that fish I shall not quarrel with the person who procures it."

Cross had a wrangle with the fish-woman, which lasted some five minutes ; bought the salmon and a few dozen of oysters, sent them home to his house, and then took Hope's arm to follow his purchase and shew him the way.

"Do you often buy fish in the market?" asked Hope laughing. "You seem to be pretty well up to the trade."

"I do now and then, for fun, take a turn through the market," answered Cross, "and then I buy fish, fruit, or flowers, if I see any that tempt me. I have not lungs to make a practice of it ; I keep a cook, however, who is a Norman, and to hear her speak you would think she was a daughter of Boreas. She buys everything for the house, which is much the best way. She cheats me of course, but in moderation, and allows no one else to do so, which I consider being in a very comfortable position. You remember the story of Lord Grey and his Greek courier?"

"No," said Hope, "I don't remember it."

"Why, he said he had found a treasure equal to the Pitt diamond ; and when asked what it was, he answered that he had found a courier who cheated him com-

fortably. That is exactly my position with my cook, and if you fix yourself here, I hope you may be equally fortunate. But here is my house, to which let me bid you welcome."

The two friends entered the door. Hope examined the house, furniture, and different arrangements, and declared that, though not so gay and smart as a Paris lodging, he thought everything fully as comfortable, and then he asked whether there was any chance of finding the same accommodation for himself. Cross explained that he could shew him plenty of houses very like his own, which he could take with only the bare walls; the furnishing must be arranged with another party, who would put in any quantity of furniture that might be required, charging rent according to the number and quality of articles supplied. Hope then inquired if, being a single man, he could not find some family with whom he might board and lodge; but Cross recommended him not to try such a plan, as the loss of temper he must endure would be but ill repaid by the saving of trouble. "You may find," he said, "what you want; but you would be very uncomfortable in changing all your own habits to suit those of your host or hostess. They think their own manners and customs charming; you would find them provincial, and think

them detestable. John Bull is a variety of the genus homo that has his own ways and understands the word *comfortable* better than any other being on earth ; he should therefore always have, what I advise you to secure, a home of his own. A very short time will suffice to get all you want in order, and in the meanwhile I can give you a room and something to eat, which, though not very splendid, is, at all events, better than your inn. A kind welcome must make up for deficiencies."

After some little demur Hope accepted the offer ; and after drinking a glass of wine and water they sallied forth in search of a house. There was no difficulty in finding one, for the panic caused by the Revolution had driven away most of the English families. Hope's arrival was therefore a godsend to the householders and dealers in furniture. Before six o'clock all his arrangements were made, on payment of a sum one-third less than the rent which Cross paid for the same accommodation, with a promise that everything should be in order in three days. Hope instantly wrote for his servant to join him, with his plate and linen ; and then sat down to Cross' snug little dinner, with, as he said, a feeling of comfort and security which he had not felt for months.

CHAPTER II.

FRESH FROM PARIS.

AFTER dinner Cross began the conversation, being anxious to hear, from an English eye-witness, what he had seen and thought of late events in Paris. Hope was no longer unwilling to speak. •

“Tell me,” said Cross, “what you felt during all these events; and if the reports are true which we have heard and seen in the newspapers regarding all the horrors which they describe. Is it true, for instance, that the women shewed such brutal cruelty in the last outbreak?”

“Strange to say,” answered Hope, “in no newspaper have I seen horrors mentioned such as I have witnessed with my own eyes. I say strange, for, in general, the caterers for the public rather exaggerate than mitigate such deeds. The French, of course, do not like to publish the account of atrocities that are disgraceful to their nation; but I am surprised none of the English newspapers have mentioned one which drove me out of Paris. I was present when an old woman was seized who

had been seen actively engaged on one of the barricades. She was searched to discover if she had any cartridges concealed on her person, and from her pocket was taken a handkerchief saturated with blood, which, when opened, was found to contain a number of tongues, eyes, and other parts of the human body, which this monster had cut off with her own hands, from the persons of some unfortunate Gardes Mobile, who were taken at the barricade where she was placed. I tell you, Cross, the expression of that wretch's face, and the contents of her pocket, have never been absent from my mind, night or day, since I saw them. I could not remain in the same town where such demons were loose, for I heard, and I believe, that many other women had acted in the same brutal manner as this fiend. She boasted that with her own hands she had mutilated all the unfortunate lads of the Garde Mobile who were taken prisoners at the barricade where she was stationed, and she had left them to bleed to death. As a great many of their bodies were found thus mangled, I believe the confession to be true. I stood the first outbreak. I saw, it is true, men with the look of fiends; men, the like of whom I never saw before, and some of my friends who have lived in Paris all their lives knew not from whence they came, though they stream into view in all great

commotions of that capital ; but these were men, not women. Their appearance and their deeds of blood did not give that feeling of shuddering horror which that old wretch's pocket gave me. I saw almost an infant shoot a man and have his own brains blown out for the act ; I heard of one poor devil being tied between two planks and then sawn in two. I have seen, with my own eyes, hats full of poisoned bullets taken from the insurgents ; indeed, I have got some dozen of these which I can shew you. All this I saw, and yet I was unwilling to leave Paris, and give up the house which had cost me so much trouble and expense to put in order. But this old fiend's look I could not endure ; I could not eat, I could not sleep ; the streets seemed to smell like a slaughter-house, and the very moon and stars had a red tinge in my eyes. I could bear it no longer, and I resolved to be off ; the only question was, where ? and this doubt, as I tell you, was answered by my accidentally seeing a large placard stuck up at the door of a diligence office, stating that there was such a place as this, which the expenditure of a few hours and a few francs would enable me to reach. I went home, consulted Murray, took my place, and alighted here last night. The sight, this morning, of a fresh-caught salmon cheered me up, for it recalled the memory of young and

happy days ; and now, thanks to your pleasant company and good dinner, I am myself again, and can think of killing fish, not men."

"And I," said Cross, "am truly glad if I have been of the least use, or comfort, to such an old friend. The only thing that astonishes me, is that you, who used to like the country and country pursuits, should have set yourself down in a great city like Paris ; you were a great lover of flowers, a dabbler in natural history, as well as a sportsman, when I first knew you."

"All true, my dear fellow," answered Hope ; "but I am not rich enough now to do all that I used to do. Sporting I was fain to give up ; but flowers I could still enjoy in the greatest perfection in Paris ; then, for natural history, or other branches of science, if I could not possess the living objects, I could see them preserved in the museum, and I could converse with men who talk well on these subjects ; and, let me tell you, that a clever Frenchman is a very agreeable companion. The most able, and therefore to me the most agreeable, are to be found in the capital. But since I am driven from thence, I shall resume my old ways ; and with your help, I hope to be able again to begin the practical, if I give up the theoretical study of birds, beasts, fishes, and flowers."

“And here,” said Cross, “you will have a tolerably good field to practise upon, for, although the birds are not very numerous, there are many different kinds. Animals are scarce, but the variety of fish is considerable, and we are rich in plants and insects.”

“To begin with fish, then,” said Hope; “you must tell me about the habits of the salmon here. Are they the same as with us in the North? when do they begin to run? when do they spawn? when does the fry come in? have you sea-trout and finnocks in any quantity, and at what time do the grilse arrive? for if they are at all like what they are with us, I may yet get a grilse or two this year, if not a salmon.”

“You ask a number of questions,” said Cross, “which I will try to answer as best I may; but in truth it is not easy to do so, for there is a considerable difference between the seasons here and at home. In the first place, great quantities of the best fish come into the rivers in December; the largest shoals of fry, it is true, arrive at the same time as with us, namely, in April, but they differ in appearance from ours. They have the same bright silvery belly, but the back, instead of being a greenish black, is here a dark straw colour, when fresh taken out of the water, which darkens as they die. I cannot help thinking that this is a beautiful

provision of nature to protect them from their enemies. The great shoal of fry hang about the foot of the streams, and these have the light colour on their backs ; but those that go higher up the river are exactly like ours at home. Now here, the bottom of all the embouchures of the rivers is a light-coloured sand, and I have asked myself if it be possible that these fish, like moths, have the power of gaining the colour of the bed on which they rest and feed. I should wish much to know if such is the case at any of the English rivers. Generally speaking, in Scotland the mouths of the streams are gravelly, or where there is sand it is dark in colour, and there the salmon fry have dark backs ; but here, the tide leaves miles of river flowing through white sand, and here the salmon fry have yellow backs in spring. I say in spring, for, strange to say, in this country there are two periods when the fry come into the rivers ; the greater quantity, as I have already told you, arrive at the same time as with us in the North ; but there is a second shoal which comes in about the last week of October or beginning of November. I took a considerable number last November ; they were undoubtedly salmon fry, and they had dark backs like our own."

"Fish often change colour," said Hope. "I once

looked into a newly made pond in a public garden in Germany, where the water was clear and the bottom of various shades. There was dark mud in some places, and light gravel newly thrown in at other spots. The pond was full of fish, and I noticed that whenever one moved from one place to another, he shewed dark or light, as the case might be, against the background, and amongst his fellows ; but after he had rested a while he assumed the shade of the ground on which he rested. Not being a fish, I cannot say whether they did it on purpose or not ; but I suspect the change of shade is in some way produced by light. Dead trouts can have no will in the matter, and they change colour in the most extraordinary way. Sometimes they mark each other, sometimes a leaf, or the basket, or anything else, marks the skin with a pattern. The dry skin is of a different shade from the wet skin. In short, I suspect that fish change colour for the same reason that men do, whatever that may be. A miner has a pale complexion, a mountaineer has a cheek as brown as his own hills. One is ‘bleached,’ and the other ‘sunburnt,’ and men and women can blush and turn pale, sometimes to very good purpose. They get red when they are hot, and icy blue when they are cold, and it may be useful to look blue on blue ice, but all this men generally do without any ex-

ercise of their will. At all events, fish change colour, and to very good purpose, for they are harder to see when they take the shade of the bottom; and so it may be a provision of nature for their protection from the enemies who are provided for their destruction, and who must, in their turn, look out for themselves, or make provision for some other. Think of that, Cross, when you use your wits to tempt a trout with a fly, and then devour him. There is a great deal to be learned before we can give reasons for anything, even for a change of colour in man or fish."

"Did you count the rays on the fins?" asked Hope.

"I did," replied Cross, "and found them quite correct. They had also the black spot on the gill, and the mark, on which I lay great stress, for ascertaining the difference between the young of the salmon and that of the bull-trout. A practised eye can distinguish a difference in the form, for the fry of the salmon has one easy even swell in the belly, while the fry of the bull-trout is more aldermanic in shape; he is more pot-bellied, and has a sort of notch under the gills, from which the swell of the belly springs. To observe this, however, requires, as I said, a practised eye, and requires also that the fish should be examined when fresh taken, for they lose this distinction when they have been dead for any time.

My mark is a much simpler, and, to my mind, a much surer test ; it is this : The scale of the young salmon is so tender, it is like the bloom on a plum, which you cannot touch without removing, while the scale on the trout is much firmer. In taking a salmon fry off your hook, your hand is silvered over with a substance which is so fine you can hardly see that it is composed of minute scales ; whereas with a trout, the scale, though it comes off, does so in a much less degree, and you can clearly distinguish that what sticks on your hand are scales. Put both fish in the water when you have killed them, and you will see the shape of your fingers clearly marked on the salmon in a sort of blue colour, quite free from any shining speck, while on the trout you will find that the scales are only partly removed, and that many still remain adhering to the parts which your fingers have pressed. I tell you I give great weight to this test, and I tried it and every other I knew, on the fry taken in November, which stood them all ; and therefore I feel confident that they were salmon fry, and that there are two seasons in France, though but one in Britain, at which salmon must spawn, and fry run. I do not like to speak positively on this point, for fish are a difficult study ; and it requires close watching for years, before being able to affirm decidedly about them ; but now that you

are here, we may observe them together, and come to a surer result—two heads being better than one. As for grilse, I do not believe there is a man in the country that knows the difference between a grilse and a salmon. There are a good many grilse sold about this time of year, and they are all called salmon. These are taken in the stake-nets, for the salmon, or grilse, will not rise in the hot weather ; and the river is so full of roots of trees, that it cannot be fished with nets ; which is fortunate, for if it could, there would not be a fish left in the water.”

“ Thank you,” said Hope, “ for your information ; I shall be delighted to assist you in your researches ; but till then, I should not quite wish to leave the river alone. I have seen fish rise well in hot weather if tried after sunset, or just as the sun is rising, and perhaps one of my small gaudy flies might tempt them.”

“ We may try, at all events,” replied Cross ; “ but there would really be no use in doing so till we have some rain ; the rivers are too sleepy to afford sport without a fresh in the water, or a stiff breeze.”

The friends continued to converse thus for an hour or two, discussing birds, fish, and flowers, but never returning to the painful scenes Hope had witnessed. He was tired and went early to bed, it being arranged that

they should try one of the rivers after the first fall of rain ; and that till then they should make little excursions to see the country, and visit the different nursery gardens, to examine the beautiful roses and carnations for which the place was famed. The weather was too sultry to go far, and Hope wished to superintend the arrangements of his house, so that the next four days were spent chiefly in lounging about the nursery gardens. On the fifth, Hope was installed in his new abode, his servant having arrived with his baggage ; but, by way of welcome, a most tremendous thunder storm and a deluge of rain burst on the town, half an hour after he had taken possession.

“That is an awful flash,” said Hope, as a clap of thunder resounded, shaking the house to the foundation. “I hope it will not frighten the fish, for this rain will make a fresh in the river, and we are to try what we can do to-morrow.”

“Aye,” answered Cross, as he looked out of the window ; “if the rivers are not too large and overflow their banks. When it does rain here, it is no trifle ; we seldom see such torrents in England, though often in Italy.”

In the evening the storm ceased, and the two friends went out to take a walk. The town being placed upon

a height, they could see that the meadows below, on either side of the river, were under water ; while, from being thus situated on a hill, the streets were scoured by the tremendous rain, so that the pavement looked as clean washed as if it had been a Dutch instead of a French town. Cross pointed this out to Hope, saying that he ascribed the great healthiness of the place mainly to this cause ; rain in Normandy not being unfrequent, and when it did come, it came with such force that it proved a first-rate scavenger, purifying in a wonderful manner the narrow dirty streets of the older part of the town.

The next morning the day was clear and bright during the early part, but the afternoon was cloudy, and as the river had fallen to nearly its usual size, the two friends dined early, and started, rod in hand, to begin a little above the village of Pont, to fish from thence to the sea line, and back again. One sea trout, two common trout, and a few chub were all that rewarded their labours when they reached a rapid, at the place where the river entered the Grève, a great sandy plain, which is covered by the sea at spring tides, but through which the river continues to wind for miles when the tide is out. On this plain, however, it is not safe to fish, for the sand is so quick in parts that hun-

dreds of people have been lost in attempting to cross it, and never seen again. Here Hope began to fish with great care ; he hooked and landed a large sea-trout, and had just raised a fine grilse, when three or four lads, who were watching them from the other side, began to throw handsfull of the white sand into the water, splashing it, and making it white and dirty. Hope remonstrated, and asked the lads to stop, but the only reply was a shout of laughter, and a double quantity of dirt thrown. Three men, who were filling carts with the sand for manure, joined the boys when they heard the noise they made. Hope requested them very politely to stop the boys from doing that which could be no amusement to them, but spoiled his fishing, when one of the men, for answer, jumped into the river, and kicked up the sand with his feet, making the water perfectly white ; a second cheered on the boys, and a third struck up a song, the chorus of which was—

“ Sur la France l'Anglais
Ne regnera jamais ”—

in which boys and men joined after the first couplet.

“ Come away,” said Cross, “ we shall do no good now. I know these fellows ; they are the leaders of all the blackguards in the place.”

“ The French themselves make a bad job of ruling

France. I would like to break some of their heads before I go!" exclaimed Hope.

"No doubt of it," replied Cross, "and so should I. You and I could lick the whole boiling of them; but if we knocked one of them down the others would be witnesses against us, and we should find ourselves to-morrow lodged at the expense of the Republic, and in quarters that Inspector Hill has never examined. The Justice of Peace will make no allowance for any provocation you may receive; and if you strike a Frenchman before witnesses you are quite sure to see the inside of a prison. But if we could get them out of sight, and then break their ribs, they would have no remedy, for no man can be a witness in his own cause. This I know, for a young countryman of ours enticed a fellow who had been insolent to him into a stable; he shut the door and half killed him, and the Frenchman could get no redress for his two black eyes and bloody nose, because he had no witness. Just now, we know not how many eyes are looking on, so we may as well go down to that dyke where there is a deep hole and a bit of a stream."

Hope bit his lip but walked on, as Cross proposed. As they reached the head of the stream, they saw a fish rolling on the shallow. Hope pulled out a good length of line and cast; but as his line fell on the water a

stone plunged beside it. The same boys were close behind them on the other side of the water. Just as the stone fell, Hope and Cross saw a large fish cross the shallow and dash into the deep pool.

"The scoundrels!" exclaimed Hope, "if that would not try the patience of Job, I do not know what would."

"I agree with you, and yet we must submit," said Cross, "for if I knocked one of them on the head with this stone, there are those three rascals standing by their carts to see what we do, so we must just grin and bear it. Our only chance is to go up the hill a little way; there is a lane by which we may make a short cut to the bridge; and perhaps, now that the sun is low, we may come better speed up the river than we did in the afternoon."

Hope absolutely ground his teeth, he was so angry; but he yielded to his younger companion, and left the river.

"Did you see that fish?" asked Cross when they were fairly in the lane, and beyond the sound of the derisive cheers which their persecutors gave on seeing them walk off.

"To be sure I did," replied Hope; "and I think I had a good chance of catching him, if those scoundrels had left us alone."

"Well, if it is any comfort to you, I do not think you had any chance," said Cross. "I suspect he was burning from the lice; did you not see the white mark on his tail, as he passed us?"

"Yes, I saw it," said Hope; "and knew at once it was either a wound or the louse mark; but I have seen fish rise very well when so marked. In some of the small rivers in the west of Scotland, the fish, after a long term of dry weather, are often marked in that way. They cannot get into these small rivers without a speat, so they lie about the mouths till rain comes; if this is long delayed, the lice get so firmly fixed on them, that they eat a hole on the dorsal fin. As these torments cannot live in fresh water more than a few hours, they fall off as soon as the fish is fairly in the river, and the spot where they have been looks white in the water. I dare say it is not very comfortable for the poor fish; but still it does not prevent their rising, for I have caught several so marked in the same day."

"What curious-looking creatures these sea lice are," said Cross; "did you ever look at them through a microscope?"

"Yes, once," replied Hope; "but my instrument was bad. They look like tadpoles, with the heads squeezed flat, and a small hole in the centre of the flat

part, just opposite the tail, which, I suppose, is the mouth. These are the animals which drive the salmon out of the sea into the rivers ; there is another, which fixes on them in the fresh water and drives them back again into the sea. Did you ever examine these ?”

“No,” said Cross, “I have not ; and though I have looked at a good many kelts, I never saw any lice on them.”

“Perhaps you did not look in the right place,” returned Hope. “The sea louse fixes on the outside of the fish, and drives him to the river—the river louse, or rather leech, fixes on the inside of the gills, and drives him back to the sea. I have examined these last pretty accurately, and I know they do not live an hour in salt water. The creature is a thin semi-transparent leech, with small bright red rings, alternating with the transparent portions for the whole length of the body. This is their appearance when alive and fixed on the gills of the fish ; but when you put a kelt into salt water, they fall off in a very short time, and then they become of a dirty yellow colour. This fact I know, for I once kept a kelt in a tub of salt water for about three hours, and then turned him out. In pouring off the water, some of these yellow creatures caught my eye ; I examined them, and found that there were thousands of them in the tub.

Not feeling quite sure if they had, or had not, been in the water before I had put the fish in the tub, I repeated the experiment, pouring the water through a sheet by way of filter, and then placed another kelt in the water with the same result. This fish was very sick, for I examined the gills before I put it in the tub, and, I have no doubt, hurt it in so doing ; but the result was the same. I saw myriads of these red and white animalcules on the fish at first, and I found them dead and dirty yellow in the water after I let the fish go."

"These two creatures, then," said Cross, "act as flappers to quicken the instinct of the salmon. The first tells him to go to the rivers to breed, the second sends him to recover his strength and flesh by sea-bathing. How do you explain the assertion that is made, that salmon do not eat in the sea, and that nothing is ever found in their stomach when they are caught?"

"Nothing in the world more simple," said Hope. "A salmon, like many other creatures, vomits when pursued or frightened, on the principle, I suppose, of 'take my money and spare my life.' Did you ever go on a rock where Solan geese were breeding? It is a very absurd sight, and a case in point. A Solan goose sits with one foot on her single egg. If you approach her, she stands up, still holding her foot on the egg,

stretches out her neck, and disgorges the contents of her crop. As soon as you move away, she recovers her property and swallows what she has just put down. A salmon, I know, goes through the first process, for I have seen it done."

"How was that?" asked Cross.

"I was on the sea in a boat," answered Hope, "rowing one bright, calm day along some rocks near the mouth of a salmon river, when I spied one of the poaching nets used by the Highlanders. To conceal these nets, they use bunches of the large button sea ware instead of corks as floats; but the water was so clear that I saw not only the net, but everything at the bottom of the sea, as clearly as if I had been in a room. We went towards the net, and, in so doing, started a salmon, which dashed into it. I saw the salmon strike and entangle itself, and in a moment begin to vomit a number of tiny herring fry. I could see them quite distinctly, for we were exactly over the fish. I pulled up the net as fast as I could, and in a second the salmon was in the boat. So quick was I, that there were upwards of a dozen of the fry still in his mouth, although he had been ejecting a shower of them as I drew him to the surface. Of course there was nothing in his stomach; but the idea of saying that salmon do not

eat is ridiculous. I have myself caught scores with a worm, and thousands are so taken every year, which sufficiently proves that they eat ; but when they find themselves fast on a hook or in a net, they disgorge like the Solan goose, or as the salmon did that I have just described, and thus nothing is found in their stomachs when they are opened."

"Your theory, I allow, is good," said Cross, "and what you tell me quite settles the question in my mind. Now, turn to your left and you are at the river again, and as I hope far from our tormentors."

Hope turned, and they reached the river at a bend. He took a few casts, hooked and landed a chub, and continued his way up the stream.

"Where can all these leaves and grass come from?" he asked ; "it is very annoying."

Cross pointed a few yards up the river ; there stood the same boys, heaving the grass, leaves, and reeds that the flood of the preceding day had left in various cracks in the bank into the water.

"Confound them !" exclaimed Hope ; "this is really past endurance." He stooped and picked up a large stone.

"Ah-h-h, sacré-é goddam," shouted the boys.

"Take that, you confounded French frog," cried Hope, as he launched the stone with all his force.

The leader put his hand to his shoulder and gave a howl, which proved that both the direction and force had been good. The rest of the boys ran away.

Cross was laughing heartily. "Come along," he said ; "we must be off as fast as we can, or we shall have the whole village on our backs. You have settled that fellow for a while."

Hope was quite satisfied with himself, and wound up his line.

"That has done me a world of good," he said. "I do not think I could have slept if I had not had a rap at one of those vermin. My only wonder is that a young fellow like you can bear their insolence."

"Why, to say the truth, I find it difficult," answered Cross. "I only resist because I know that just now these fellows would have the best of it. It is dangerous at any time in this country to strike a man ; at the present moment it would be folly. 'When the pot boils, the scum is on the top,' is an old proverb which is most true in France just now. Even here, in this quiet place, where there are not many blackguards, the magistrates are so afraid of these few, that an Englishman has no chance of justice or fair play should he get into a row with any of them. So we had better step out, for the worst characters in this part of the country are the

carters who live in this village, and if we remain we are sure to get into a scrape."

"Discretion is the better part of valour," said Hope, "so come along."

The two friends walked briskly forward for some distance along the banks of the river, and were in the act of turning into a little path that led towards the hill, when Hope suddenly stopped.

"Come along," said Cross. "I see a crowd beginning to gather on the bridge. I have no doubt they are looking after us."

"I cannot help that," replied Hope; "I saw a kingfisher come out of a hole in that high bank, therefore I am sure she has got a nest, and if I am obliged to fight half the town, I must have a look at it."

"Mark the place," said Cross, "and we will come another day; we have got no spade, so we shall only get into a useless row, and see nothing, if we wait now."

"I believe you are right," said Hope, reluctantly; "as we have no spade, we may as well move on, but it is very provoking. I have been all my life hunting after kingfishers' nests, and I have never found but three: one when I was a boy at Eton; one in Northamptonshire, and one in Italy, in a small stream running into the Lago Maggiore. Every one of these nests

was different, so that I am most anxious to find another, to ascertain if they always differ in the form or not."

"I hardly think you can prove this now," said Cross, "for so late in the year you are not likely to find a nest, although you may see a bird come out of a hole."

"There you are wrong," answered Hope, "for I found the nest in Northamptonshire in the month of July, and it had five eggs in it. I was fishing for perch with bait, and I saw a kingfisher come out of a hole, as I did just now. I got a spade, dug upwards of a yard into the bank, and found the eggs; for in this instance there was no nest, but only a few very minute white bones, mixed with the earth around them."

"And how did you find the other two nests?" asked Cross, "for you have been more fortunate than I have been. I have seen thousands of kingfishers, and have shot dozens, yet I never found a nest."

"And a great many naturalists are in the same position as yourself," answered Hope. "Some people say that the kingfishers enter their nests below water, but this I doubt. They may perhaps take possession of an old rat's hole, so near the water's edge that in floods the entrance may be under water. Thus the first brood may be sometimes destroyed, and the parent birds may breed a second time, which will account for finding

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nests with eggs so late in the season, and yet find young birds ready to fly at a much earlier part of the year. If these birds bred twice a year they would be much more numerous than they are, but being comparatively scarce, I am led to think that they only breed a second time when their first nest is destroyed either by rats or floods. Now, the first nest I ever saw was in the month of May. It was discovered quite by accident. Instead of fishing, I was swimming in the Thames, when I observed one of those beautiful little birds dart out of a hole close to me. I told two of my schoolfellows of my discovery, so we provided ourselves with a landing net, and next day we went to try and catch the bird as she flew out, but she escaped us then, for we saw her fly away when we were some yards distant from the bank. I suspect that they hear footsteps at a great distance when any one approaches their nest, and that they go at once, which is the reason they are so seldom perceived coming out of their holes. As I tell you, this lady escaped us that day, but as we were resolved to obtain her, one of my companions proposed that we should climb out of our dame's house at night, and at all risks make sure of our prize. Though such an expedition was a sort of high treason against the laws of Dr. Keat and Eton College, the temptation overcame all fears of birch. We agreed

to go, and having provided a boat, a landing-net, and a spade, as soon as everybody was in bed we clambered over the garden paling, took our way to the river, got into our boat, and dropped gently down the stream till we came to the bank where the nest was. There the boat was softly pushed to the shore, and the bag of the landing-net was fixed over the mouth of the hole. When this was completed, we no longer cared about keeping silence ; we landed, and began to dig away the bank from above. This work had not continued many minutes when we heard the harsh disagreeable notes of the mother, who had darted from her nest and was screaming in the net, in which she was fairly entangled. The poor bird was soon placed in one of our hats, over the top of which a handkerchief was tied, and she was then deposited in the locker of the skiff, which operation was performed by one of my companions, who got his fingers well bit before it was accomplished. The mother being thus secured, we resumed our digging, which took us so long that day was breaking before we arrived at the nest. We worked very carefully for fear of injuring it, and well worthy was it of our trouble, for when at last we reached it, we saw something that looked like the carved ivory balls that are sent from China. One side only was open, and within were three young birds

nearly full fledged. This prize was placed first in a pocket-handkerchief, and then in a hat ; the boat was rowed back to its hiding-place, and we took our way home-across the fields, and re-entered our dame's house without discovery ; but we were so delighted with our success, that we were quite prepared to take a flogging without a murmur, had we been missed. I ought to mention that before we came away, we saw in the faint light what we called the "other old one," namely, the male kingfisher, flying backwards and forwards before the place we had disturbed, which I remember now, for it convinces me that these birds are greatly attached to their young. We did our best to make up to our captives for the loss of parental care ; the father was not likely to come to them, and the mother killed herself against the cage, before we were out of school that morning, leaving her offspring to our sole care. Whether we took too much, or too little, I don't know, but the whole of them were dead in three days, in spite of all the minnows and prickle-backs that we crammed down their throats. However, in death we did them every honour, for we clubbed our money to pay a certain Mr. Joe Cannon for stuffing them ; the young ones were then replaced in their nest, and the mother was perched by their side, on a bit of root ; and as a mark of maternal

tenderness, she had a minnow fixed in her mouth. The nest, in this instance, was very curious and beautiful; when cleared from the sand that adhered to it, it looked brilliantly white, and on close examination, it proved to be made of myriads of small fish bones, glued together with a browner substance. It was nearly circular, having only one side open; the top, bottom, and sides, were all composed of the same substance; the inside was covered with some of the light sandy soil which surrounded it, and which adhered to the bottom; the outside was beautifully white, and looked, as I said before, like carved ivory or lace. In the nest which I found in Northamptonshire, I have already told you, there were only eggs; they were deposited at the end of a hole four feet deep, and were lying on sand, mixed with a few small bones; and I may mention, by the bye, a circumstance which I have never seen remarked by any naturalist, namely, that the shell of these eggs was thinner and more tender than that of any other which I ever saw. There were five eggs in the nest when I found it; but with all the care I could take, two of them were broken before I reached home."

"You said that you had found three nests," said Cross, "what was the third like?"

"That is just what I am going to tell you," replied

Hope. "When I was in Italy, I one day crossed the Lago Maggiore in a boat to see the famous fig orchards. The season of the year you may know by my telling you that the figs were colouring, and had a bluish tint. As I was walking out of one of these orchards, where the trees are said to be of great age, I saw two men, one of whom was carrying a silk flue net without any corks on it. The other had two long poles on his shoulder. I asked them where they were going to fish, and they answered that they were going to catch birds, not fish. I proposed to go with them, to which they agreed ; so I followed till we came to a small river with rows of pollard trees and bushes lining either side of it. Here the men stopped, and one of them crossed the stream, taking one end of the net in his hand and drawing it after him. When across, he fastened it to one of the trees on his side, and the man who remained with me did the same to the other end which he had retained. The net thus remained tightly stretched across the river, the bottom just touching the water, the upper edge about four feet and a half above it. The trees and bushes overhanging the stream threw a shade on the spot, so that the net was hardly perceptible at a few yards' distance. When all was thus arranged the man on my side bade me lie down and hide myself where I could

watch what took place. I did so. First, they each took a pole and made a circuit, keeping a good distance from the water, and approaching it again when they had gone about four hundred yards up the stream ; then they began to shout and beat the bushes with the poles, advancing rapidly towards me as they did so. Before they had completed half the distance, I saw two or three kingfishers dart past like bullets from a gun, and in the next moment I heard the same harsh screaming notes that had struck my ear on our night excursion from Eton College. I raised myself and saw the bright green colours of the birds fluttering in the net ; the men still advanced, and then I saw, one after another, the rapid flight, and black-and-white plumage of about six or seven water-ouuzels, which dashed past me and struck the net as if a stone had been thrown against it. These gave but one scream, and hung quietly in the sort of bag which they had made for themselves. The kingfishers continued to struggle and cry till the men came up, and then the noise of the poor birds was soon hushed, for the net was loosened on one side and pulled to the other, and each bird, as it came to hand, was seized, a spike was stuck into the back of its head, and it was thrown on the ground, to give one more flutter and die. The net was then spread on the ground, each

bird was cautiously taken out of the bag he had made for himself, their ruffled feathers were smoothed, and they were carefully laid out in a basket. I asked what use was made of these birds, and was told that they were valued for their skins, the kingfishers especially. The skins of the water-ouzels were used to line muffs and cloaks, and their flesh was eaten, but no one ate the kingfishers. When this first beat was over, we went on for a quarter of a mile higher up the stream, where the same process was gone through of hanging the net; the men went away as before, and I was again left to watch. It was while I was thus lying waiting that I found the third nest. Before me was a steep bank of red clay, out of which a number of the roots of the trees were sticking. Suddenly I thought I saw something move under one of these roots; I kept my eye on the spot, and a second time I felt sure I saw some object. When the men began to advance and shout, I was so intent in watching the other bank, that I did not perceive a kingfisher fly past me; but I heard his scream when caught, and at the same moment I saw the brilliant colour of another dart from under the root, pass me like a flash, and join its screams with those of the first, for it too was caught in the same snare. I need not repeat that the operation, before gone through, of spiking the

heads of the captives and basketing them, followed ; no mercy was shewn, and in two minutes after the men had come up, all was over with the birds that had been taken. But while this process was going on I had slipped into the stream and had waded across, nearly up to my middle ; and sure enough, when I reached the other side, I saw a small round hole under the root from whence I had seen the second kingfisher dart. Spade I had none, but the bank was composed of a very soft, sandy clay. One of the men came across to see what I was doing, and with his knife he made a sort of spade out of a bit of wood, with which I dug away the earth, and soon arrived at the nest, for the hole was barely a foot deep in this instance. When I reached the nest, I found four young birds, not long hatched ; there was no use in leaving them, for I had a certainty that the mother was no longer able to take any further care of them, seeing that I knew she was safely deposited in my companions' basket ; I therefore dug the nest carefully out. It was composed of similar materials to the one I had found on the banks of the Thames, but the colour was of a dirty yellow, instead of white, and the form was different, being round like the nest of the hedge sparrow, except at the back, and there it rose, with an irregular edge, about

two inches higher than the front. The bottom, front, and sides were quite hard, but the part that rose behind was soft, and broke easily under my fingers when I lifted it from the ground; but on the next morning, when I again examined it, I found that what had been soft the day before was then dry and hard. I mention all these circumstances rather at length," continued Hope, "wishing to draw your attention to them, because from them I have formed a theory as to the habits of kingfishers, which I believe to be correct. Great difference of opinion has existed regarding these birds, both amongst ancient and modern writers. The ancients supposed that the nests were made of foam that would float on the water. Modern writers say very little about them; but relate the diversity of formation that has been observed, without assigning any reason for the difference. Now, I believe that I can explain this difference from the observations I have made on the three nests just described.

"First, the tender quality of the eggs explains their being laid on soft sand. Secondly, I am convinced that the nests are entirely formed from the castings of the birds, for, when carefully examined, it will be seen that the whole mass is composed of the bones of small fish; the darker part may be the partially digested scales that

are ejected with the bones, and which, when dry, form the cement that glues the whole together. I have no doubt these birds cast like hawks, for during the three days that our young kingfishers lived at Eton, they did so, daily ejecting quids of white, lumpy matter, which at the time, we, in our ignorance, considered as a sign that they were not in good health. We did not then know that hawks cast up the feathers and fur which they swallow with more digestible food, and therefore we did not reason, as I do now, that if hawks eject feathers and fur, kingfishers may do the same by the bones they swallow. But to go on : The nest which I found with eggs, was no nest at all. Bewick, I think, describes one that he saw having six eggs, which had a nest, but he does not say whether these eggs had been sat upon, or were fresh laid. The eggs I found were perfectly fresh, and there were only five of them ; now, if six is the number they generally lay, my birds had not finished laying. If the eggs referred to by Mr. Bewick had been sat upon, the theory I have formed, and which I am going to tell you, remains correct. It is this—that these birds take possession of a hole, in which they deposit their delicate eggs, and gradually raise a nest around them by their castings. If I remember rightly, Bewick describes the nest he saw as being round and flat, like

that of a chaffinch ; now, if these eggs had been sat upon, there would have been from eighteen to twenty-one days, during which time the castings of the parent birds might have accumulated sufficient material to build such a nest as he describes. The nest I saw in Italy was deeper than this of Mr. Bewick's, and there was the commencement of the wall at the back ; but then, be it remembered, the birds were hatched, and must have been so for some days. The difference in the size of that nest may therefore be explained by the greater quantity of castings accumulated during that time, not only from the parents, but also from the young brood, and this idea is confirmed by remembering what I told you of the first nest which I saw on the banks of the Thames. There the birds were nearly ready to fly, and there the habitation was nearly round, which may be accounted for by the building up of the great increase of castings which must have been deposited during the time these older birds were growing to maturity. Tell me now, what do you think of this theory ?

“ Why,” replied Cross, “ it seems to be a very probable solution of a doubtful question, and it will certainly give a fresh zest to my search for nests.”

“ You may be more fortunate in that respect than I have been,” said Hope, “ if you take as much trouble ;

but do you know, it is upwards of twenty years since I found the last nest, and I have never been near a river which kingfishers frequent, that I have not watched them for hours, both early and late, and yet I have never been able to see any other go into a hole. They have the cunning of Old Nick, and always contrive to evade my sight. Indeed I cannot help thinking that they do not always confine themselves to building on the banks of rivers, for I watched for many days a pair that came to fish at a small rapid. I saw these birds catch their fish and fly away with them in their mouths. Instead of following the river, they always flew across a field. I observed that in their flight they invariably passed close by a hollow ash tree, and after that I lost sight of them. I hid myself in the hedge near this tree; the first day they came close by me; I know not whether I was seen or not, but they turned round the tree and flew straight back to the river, and though I went there several times afterwards, I never got another glimpse of them."

"You marked well the place whence the bird came just now?" asked Cross.

"Exactly," answered Hope.

"Well, to-morrow, or next day, we will dig it out," said Cross; "it will give me great pleasure to assist you

in your researches ; and if you require any further examples, we can watch them in the river to the north of this ; they are more numerous there, and the fishing is better there also, only the people are more troublesome, and we have further to go. Have you seen many of these birds in Scotland ?”

“No,” replied Hope, “not many ; but I have seen one or two at a time in several places. I have seen them in the Tyne, in the Findhorn, and in various parts of the West Highlands. A pair, for two years, frequented a pond in a garden in one of the Western Isles ; but, apparently, they never bred, for only one pair were ever seen, and at the end of the second year they vanished.”

“I never,” said Cross, “saw the nets used in the way you describe, but I have seen something of the sort done for catching woodcocks. If our poachers knew the plan, they might spoil many a good day’s shooting. The way I saw it done was this : A net, such as you describe, was hoisted up and suspended between two trees, in a narrow ride in one of the large woods near Ostia. Just as the sun was setting, one man remained concealed at the foot of one of the trees, holding a line in his hand by which he could hoist or lower the net at pleasure ; two other men with dogs then went to a distance, and beat the wood very quietly. This set all the woodcocks in

motion, and as it was flitting time, when once on the wing, they flew about, dashing up one opening and darting down another. If they chanced to enter the ride, where we were posted, they were sure to be taken, for they seemed never to see the net, but went headlong into it. Whenever they became entangled, they made a great noise, which struck me as remarkable ; for when shot, woodcocks die without a sound, even when caught by a dog they give no cry, but in the net they invariably did so. The man who held the line, always allowed them to scream and struggle for a while before lowering the net to wring the birds' necks. I asked him his reason for so doing, and he told me that these cries alarmed the other birds, and prevented their alighting to feed, and that, as they flew about to see where the danger was, they were pretty sure to pass into the ride where he was waiting for them. I can only say that the plan was very successful, for I saw nine taken in the hour that I remained to watch the process."

"I have heard," said Hope, "that pigeons are caught in this way also, but I never had the luck to see how it was done. I am sure, however, that great quantities of wood-pigeons might be taken any night in autumn, in our woods, by merely hanging a net across some of the openings or rides at sunset."

“I am sure they might,” answered Cross ; “but it was not wood-pigeons, but a sort of turtle-doves that I saw caught in Italy. I was present on two occasions when an immense number were killed. The method was much the same in both instances, but the situation was different. The first was in a large wood near Florence ; a net was hung across a road in the wood which ran nearly north and south. In two high trees near this road, stages were raised from which the whole country could be commanded, and in these stages, boys were hid, having with them several stuffed imitations of birds with their wings out-spread. These were made with a weight towards the head, and had a string, about a yard long, fastened to the tail. This string the boy held in his hand, and whenever a flock of pigeons was seen in the distance, he whirled the lure round his head and cast it towards the net ; the string acted like a sling, enabling the boy to throw the lure to a great distance, the weight in the head making it fly straight forward like a shuttlecock. If the lure was seen by a flock of pigeons, they were sure to turn towards it : if they did not turn, it was because that the first cast had not been seen, and the same boy threw a second or a third time till the birds came towards them. The second boy always remained still until the flock were quite close, then he also threw

a lure straight towards the net. The art consisted in judging the proper moment when to throw, in throwing in the right direction, and without being seen himself ; for when this was well done, the whole flock were sure to go headlong into the trap. On the first occasion, I saw many hundreds taken ; on the second, there was nearly a cart-load killed ; as I told you, the method was different, in so far that the place chosen was a narrow valley to the south of Naples. There were several boys and men employed in casting lures, who concealed themselves in small huts built of turf. The head man threw the last lure with great skill. The net was suspended between two rocks, and I saw upwards of a hundred pigeons fluttering in it at the same moment."

"I should like to see that for once," said Hope, "but it must be sad butchery. These Italians are most ingenious in their method of catching every sort of bird ; the quantity of quails they take in the long nets which they set along the coast is quite surprising."

"I never saw that done," said Cross, "but, on one occasion, I saw the quails arriving, absolutely alighting in the town of Naples, so exhausted that they might have been knocked down with a stick ; indeed I did catch two or three with my hat on the rocks by the Castel dell'Ovo."

“They do not kill the quails as they catch them,” said Hope; “they put them into long narrow boxes, and feed them on hemp and other seeds till they are fat. They are such pugnacious little rascals, that they give them no space to turn or move ; as they fatten, they draw up a slide giving an inch or two at a time, to allow for the expansion of flesh, but no more ; for if any one bird could turn, he would instantly kill his neighbour. You know that the Chinese fight quails in the same way that they used to fight game-cocks in England not long ago.”

“I am aware of that,” replied Cross, “but I wished you to tell me what sort of net was used for catching them in Italy.”

“Simple enough,” answered Hope. “The net is about a yard deep, but of great length ; the bottom of this is pegged to the sand, close to the edge of the sea ; the top is hung on small notches cut in sticks, about two feet and a half long, which are stuck upright about a foot before the net, and about three yards apart. When the net is set, it is thus made to stand up, being suspended on these sticks ; but as the upper part rests only on the notches, a very slight blow knocks it off, and then it falls on the sand, covering with its meshes whatever chanced to strike it. I remember once lying for hours among

some sea-ware, watching one of these snares ; at every moment I saw the little jerk, and then a portion of the net fall ; but I never could distinguish the birds, they flew so fast and so close to the water. I never perceived one till I followed the proprietor and saw him put his hand under the net at every place where it had fallen, lift up a quail and deposit it in a large hollow gourd, that he carried instead of a basket, and then hang the net again on the notch in the stick. The net of which I speak was more than half a mile long, and the owner spent the whole day in walking gently from one end of it to the other, gathering the birds, and as he reached each end he emptied his gourd into a number of long narrow boxes with canvas tops and fronts, which were ranged in readiness. All the boxes were provided with seed and water-troughs, and the Padrone told me that if the canvas front was shut down, so as to prevent the birds from looking about, they were such bold little fellows, that they would eat and drink freely ten minutes after they were taken."

"That method of snaring," said Cross, "is simple enough, but it can only be practised where the birds arrive in the great flights like those which alight on the Italian coast. There are considerable flights in the southern coasts of France ; but in this part of the country

there are only a few bebies. I have, however, seen here some large flocks of pigeons that resemble very closely those in Italy, only that they appear smaller. They are called *La Tourterelle*. A great number of these breed in England. They leave our shores about the end of August, but they remain much later here, for I saw several large flocks going in a south-eastern direction in the last week of October.

“ You mentioned just now that the Chinese spent their time and lost their money in fighting quails ; here the little blackguard boys gamble by fighting stag-beetles. These creatures fight like fury, tearing each other to pieces ; and you need not be surprised if some day you find one thrown on you by some of the gamins : it has been done to myself and some others of our country men and women. If a stag-beetle gives you a pinch, it is no trifle, for I never saw such large ones as there are here, and this year they are very numerous. You may see and hear scores of them whirring past you every evening. But here we are at the road ; turn to your left ; we will go by the steep path ; it is shorter, and we have less chance of meeting any of the blackguards who may have followed us from Pont Gilbert.”

“ Shew the way,” replied Hope, “ and I will follow.”



LA TOUTE LIE AV RANCHES

Cross turned into a narrow path that wound up the steep face of the hill on which the town was built. Trees and shrubs had fixed their roots in the crevices of the rock and shallow soil, gaining sufficient nourishment to grow to such a size as to shade the path and mask the view. They did not take many minutes to reach the top, where, being free from shrubs and above the trees, a most extensive prospect opened before them. Hope was delighted with the scene, and not sorry to pause and admire it ; for although the ascent had not been long, it was very steep, and quite sufficient to make a pause agreeable to a gentleman who had spent so many months in the idleness of a Paris life. Once on the top, therefore, they paused to breathe and look about them.

“It is a beautiful view,” observed Hope, whenever he had recovered breath enough to speak.

“It is indeed,” said Cross ; “and I am not sorry that we are now here to contemplate it, instead of being down there,” and he pointed to the river.

“I see,” said Hope, and he counted seventeen men and four boys who were returning towards the bridge ; “do you think those fellows have been looking after us ?”

“Not a doubt of it,” answered Cross ; “and before

we go down there again, we must make peace with those vagabonds. I know two of them ; one is the postman, the other a shoemaker, and as they are the strongest men and good-tempered fellows, though great blackguards, I will give them a few fish-hooks and a franc or two to make them keep the rest in order : till that is done, we must not repeat our visit to the river."

"I have no patience with you," exclaimed Hope ; "knuckling down to these scum of the earth is too revolting. I would much rather get two or three of our countrymen, and see if they dare touch us."

"Revolting enough, undoubtedly," answered Cross ; "but remember the good old proverb, 'It is better to flatter than fight with a fool.' If Louis Philippe had followed this plan, he would still have been on the throne of France : and suppose we did lick these fellows, as I allow we might do, they would only revenge themselves on the first of our countrymen or countrywomen whom they found alone. 'No, no ; I am all for making a friend of the shoemaker by getting him drunk, and leaving him to settle with his companions. I tried the soothing system at Ducey with great success, although they were all on fire there against us, merely because an Englishman was present when a nice, half-cracked young Irishman chose to

fire a pistol at a set of scamps who were throwing leaves and dirt into the river to spoil his fishing, just as they did to you to-day. I believe they thought he was English, but he astonished them by blazing right into the middle of his tormentors. They ran away, but we got the blame, and no one could go near the place afterwards without being robbed and insulted, until I be-thought me to order some wine from a radical wine-seller, who was the leader of all the rows ; and since then, I am privileged to go there in peace, though the war still holds good against Englishmen in general."

" Well, perhaps you are right," said Hope, "and I give you credit for your judgment and temper ; so if this river is closed against us for a while, you must shew me the other, and introduce me to your friend. Just now, I may console myself for being driven away from my sport by looking about me while there is light enough to admire this view, which is certainly very beautiful, with the purple tint falling on that immense extent of rich wooded country ; and with this pretty garden which we overlook as a foreground, the picture is really charming. What thousands of roses they have ! I am not quite sure that I admire the square patches in which they are planted, though thus crowding them together enables you to compare the many different colours and

shades of colours that are mingled side by side. I see a number of children moving about among the beds. Are they gathering flowers for bouquets?"

Cross watched the children for a moment; each carried a bag, and they were carefully examining every separate flower, and picking something from them which they put into these bags.

"No, no," he replied. "They are not pulling the flowers; they are preserving them, and their occupation is rather a curious one, for it serves a double purpose. These children are employed in at once saving these beautiful roses from destruction, and preparing food for the ducks that they rear. There is here a small beetle, not the rose beetle of England, the *Cetonia aurata*, but one of the cockchafer tribe, that attacks the roses and devours them. At times they come in such quantities that they would not leave a rose or a hollyhock untouched, these being the two flowers they principally destroy. Ducks are very fond of these insects, and grow very fat and large by eating them. Gardeners, therefore, generally rear a brood or two of ducks, and their children collect the beetles to give to them. If a gardener has no ducks of his own, or no children, he allows any whom he knows to be careful to come and gather them, and there are always plenty anxious to avail themselves of

that permission. The children you see are thus employed. You may see more boys shaking the trees and picking up something from the ground ; they are collecting the common cockchafer, which they use for the same purpose ; the ducks eat them most greedily, and grow very fat on them ; but when fed on the common cockchafer, that food gives a strong smell and disagreeable flavour to their flesh ; so much so, that no one will buy the birds till they have been kept for some time after on boiled buckwheat or other grain, which purifies them. The smaller sort of beetles, however, that these children are gathering from the roses, fatten the ducks without giving them a bad smell or flavour, and therefore they are at a premium and eagerly sought for. Feeding ducks on cockchafers is said to make them lay a great number of eggs. It might be well, therefore, if the plan were introduced into England for feeding the breeding birds of our cottagers. I own I should not like to eat one fed on such nasty food, even if it should not give a bad taste to the flesh ; but for breeding birds, and to increase the supply of eggs, I think the system would be highly advantageous to our poor. In the neighbourhood of Windsor, for instance, I have seen such quantities of these insects that I could have filled a large sack in an hour or two. Here, the practice of

seeking them is universal ; there is not a garden or a public walk where children are allowed to go, that you may not see them, bag in hand, shaking the trees, and gathering the cockchafers as they fall."

"Your hint may class with the *utile*, though not exactly with the *dulce*," said Hope ; "therefore I shall remember it. But look ; can you tell me what bird that is ? I thought at first it was a robin of some strange variety ; but now I see it is not one. The red on the breast is darker, and there is a yellowish colour on the side ; the bird, too, is smaller and more slender in the form, and there is a white line on the edge of the tail. See, there are two ; and they have some young ones following."

"Ah !" answered Cross, "I am glad you have pointed it out, and that I can repay you for your information regarding the kingfishers. That little bird is very scarce in England, and not very common here. I have seen it several times, however, in this part of the country, and in great numbers in the south. Bewick calls it the Dartford Warbler, and Buffon the Pittechou. It has a very pretty note, and, like the robin, it gives the sign of fine weather by sitting on the highest twig of a bush and singing, when rain has ceased and the day is clearing up."

"They are very pretty birds," said Hope, "and I am

afraid I am barbarian enough to wish to kill a couple for the sake of their skins, as I have never seen one of them before, either dead or alive. But they are going to roost, and we may as well go home, as the light is failing fast."

Cross assented to this proposition, so they bent their steps towards the town. They had not gone far along the first street when they heard the rattle of a carriage behind them. They drew to one side to allow it to pass. When the conveyance overtook them, the driver pulled up, and hailed Cross by his name. Hope then saw that two of his countrymen occupied a sort of half gig, half cart, in which he observed some fishing-rods and baskets.

"What sport?" asked the driver, whose tongue announced him to be an Irishman, and whose breadth of shoulders marked him as a most useful friend in a row.

"Very little," answered Cross, "but it might have been better ;" and he then, in a few words, related their adventure.

The Irishman burst out laughing.

"By the holy poker," he exclaimed, "we have had just such another turn up with the blackguards. We went about four miles above Ducey last night—we had

good sport there—and again this morning, and nobody disturbed us ; but this afternoon, two chaps thought proper to molest me just when the trout were rising. Well, one of them got hold of my rod and broke it, for which I knocked him down, and threw his friend into the river ; upon which they walked off, swearing like blue blazes, and I set to work to splice my rod. It was rather a long job, and I had hardly finished it, when our landlord, an honest fellow, came down to beg us to be off as fast as we could, for the two blackguards were raising the country, and that we should be murdered. We refused at first ; but then he changed his tune, and declared that the people would burn his house for giving us shelter, and he really seemed in such a fright that we agreed to go. He had brought our gig and traps to the road, hard by, so we forthwith put up our tackle and started, and faith, none too soon, for we saw forty or fifty fellows, with pitch-forks and scythes, coming down the road headed by our acquaintances. We met four or five more going to join them, who did not venture to stop us, but contented themselves with sending a volley of stones after us when we had passed. Fortunately they were precious bad shots, for none of them touched us. I just gave them a bit of my mind and drove off, as I thought fifty to two, without mentioning pitch-

forks and scythes, was rather too long odds to be pleasant."

"Were you trespassing on those people's land, that they molested you?" asked Hope.

"Their ground!" exclaimed the Irishman; "they never had a shovelful of land among the whole boiling! why, the river is government property, and I have leave from every proprietor on both sides of the stream. It is nothing but dirty jealousy; the blackguards cannot make or throw a fly themselves, and they can't bear to see a man that can. 'If there was law or justice, no man would be allowed to molest a gentleman when he is amusing himself with a quiet day's fishing, and hurting nobody. If they had any civility, they would not come fifty to one, on a stranger, who had mastered two of them already."

"I am sorry for this," said Cross; "for now it is quite impossible for us to see this river."

"Take some of our fish, then," said the Irishman; "if you cannot see the river, you may as well taste what comes out of it, and we have far more than we can use, we have nearly four dozen of trout, besides dace and gudgeon."

Cross accepted the offer, for he was anxious that Hope should see the sort of fish which the river

afforded. A dozen trout and as many gudgeons were therefore put into his basket, and the two parties separated.

The fish were produced at dinner ; they were well shaped and handsome in appearance, but soft and not well flavoured.

"Well, it is a bore," said Hope, "being prevented from fishing any of the rivers ; but in the eating way, we suffer no loss, for I cannot say much for the quality of these trout for the table."

"In the spring," said Cross, "they are excellent, and by that time we must hope that something like order will be restored to the country. In the meanwhile, we must go some distance for a day's fishing, or find some other way of passing our time."

"Is there no sea fishing?" asked Hope ; "I should like much to know something of the coast, and the produce of the sea hereabouts. We may find some other curiosity, besides that of oysters being in season all the year round."

"I will make inquiries," answered Cross ; "but for a few days we must content ourselves with looking at the country, or watching some of the birds or insects. If you care for entomology, this part of France is tolerably rich in insects. Among other things, there

is a great variety of dragon-flies; I killed one the other day, that I never saw before, it had a death's head, and a body as thick as my little finger."

The friends continued thus to converse on various subjects, till it was time to retire to bed. Two days after their adventure, armed with a spade, they returned to the river, with the intention of digging out the kingfisher's nest. The hole was situated very near the water, and had a high bank of soft sand above. They commenced to try to undermine it, but the sand was so soft, that after making a hole, less than a foot deep, the bank from above rolled down, bringing several tons weight of earth, which nearly fell upon them. Nothing daunted, they again resumed their exertions, but had not proceeded long, when they heard the voice of a man remonstrating in no measured terms. Cross turned at the sound and recognised a small farmer, a dealer in butter, to whom the land belonged. To him, Cross explained the object of their labours, and the farmer very good-humouredly replied, that the search might be extremely interesting to them, but ruinous to him, for he found it difficult enough, as it was, to prevent the river from carrying away his land, and that if they seconded its encroachments by continuing to dig, the first flood would cause him great damages. The man spoke

with so much good temper, that both Cross and Hope at once felt the propriety of yielding to his remonstrance by abandoning their work.

“It is a confounded bore!” said Hope, as he walked off. “It seems as if there was a charm against my ever being able to prove or disprove my theory regarding kingfishers’ nests!”

CHAPTER III.

A TRIP TO CAROLLES.

“WHAT say you to a trip to Carolles?” said Cross, entering the room where Hope was sitting. “We can find very good quarters, as there is a tolerable cabaret, where they have a *table-d’hôte*, at which you may dine at two o’clock ; they will give us a bit of dinner very comfortably at a later hour should we prefer it, or if you would like to be still more quiet, there are several houses wherein you may have rooms, and the mistress will cook for us. The houses are not quite such as you would expect to find in an English bathing-place, yet still, many of the best French families go to Carolles and to the other fishing villages along the coast, and rough it for a few weeks for the benefit of sea-bathing. I mention Carolles in preference to any other village, because it is within easy distance of the Mare de Boulion, where there is very fair trout fishing, and as you wish to learn the method of fishing on this coast, you will be able to see the different modes of sea fishing, and

also get a few days' whipping at the river, or on the lake."

"By all means let us go," said Hope; "how shall we go, and what things should we take with us? It is exactly what I wished to see. You young fellows don't care for your comforts, but I am old enough now to like to get a good bed and a good dinner, as well as good sport, and by your description I shall get all of these at Carolles. I am very anxious to see the manners and customs of the population on this part of the coast, so when shall we start, and how?"

"Why, for the when, I say to-morrow, for it is full moon the day after, and there is little or no fishing here except at spring tides; if we start to-morrow, you will be able to see the coast fishing for three or four days, which should be ample time to satisfy your curiosity; and as to the how, I will secure a covered cabriolet and a horse, with a lad to take care of the beast and drive us. You can take with you all the clothes you require, and as you like your comforts, there can be no harm in taking a few bottles of wine and a pie. Good brandy you can always get, and cider in these little villages is always better than in the larger places, for they never put any water into it in the country, which they always do in the towns. These liquors satisfy me, but we may

take a few bottles of good wine for a treat. As for eating, there are ducks, chickens, and eggs in every house, mutton, and of the best, is to be got now and then, and they always have bacon, which, when new, is excellent, though I allow it is rancid when kept for any length of time, and at this season fruit and vegetables are so abundant and so good that you may feast like an alderman, even without the fish which we may catch or buy."

"Bravo! that will do; you shall be Commissary-General; and, let me tell you, I have always considered the commissariat as a highly honourable portion of the military service, for, judging by myself, I am sure I should never fight well on short commons. I shall therefore leave all to your guidance; name your hour, and I shall be ready to a moment."

"At eight, then, we shall start, for although we have not far to go, the roads are execrable, and it is as well to have a long day before us to ensure finding good quarters, and getting everything in order before night; and as we pass through St. Jean de Thomas, we may as well spend an hour or two there, to see that village and the country round it."

"I like your plan amazingly, so, while you make arrangements for the journey, I will look over the tackle, and choose a couple of rods; but as there is no use in

taking more than we want, you must tell me what sort of flies to select."

"Why, for flies, I am as much in the dark as you are, for the natives rarely use them, they almost always fish with worms or maggots ; but you can never go far wrong in trusting to black and red palmers. Of these you have a goodly stock of all sizes in your trout book. By taking that book and a couple of fifteen-feet rods, we shall be able to do something. I will take a few small gaudy sea-trout flies, as I hear that a Frenchman had a very good day's sport with them last week ; so now, good-bye till dinner-time."

At dinner the two friends met again. Cross reported that the conveyance was ordered and the supplies prepared ; and Hope shewed his fishing-basket and rods properly packed, with fly-hooks, reels, and lines in the basket, and the preparation he seldom neglected for the creature comforts, namely, a flask with a sliding cup, and a sandwich box, which resembled and was worn like a cartridge-box.

Upon the principle of victualling the garrison, a regular Scotch breakfast was prepared, and next morning, at eight to a minute, the carriage drove up to the door. It was a cabriolet with a hood, with very long shafts, and very large wheels ; it was drawn by a little black stallion,

not above fourteen hands high, and from the length of the shafts and the height of the wheels, he looked much smaller than he really was; the driver, a sharp-looking boy of twelve years old, was seated on a bit of board at the foot of the apron, with one foot resting on each shaft. He came up to the door at a rattling trot, and sprung from his seat as he pulled up, giving a familiar nod to the gentlemen at the window.

The carpet-bags were tossed into a sort of case on the top of the hood, and a leather cover buckled over them; the bottles and a large pie, with sundry smaller articles, were packed below the seat, and the driver with another nod and grin announced that all was ready and summoned the party to take their places.

When Hope came down to the door the diminutive appearance of the horse struck him more forcibly than when he had seen it from the window.

"Surely," he said, "you don't mean to tell me that this wretched little beast is able to take us over twelve miles of such roads as you have been describing."

"No fear of him," answered Cross, "he would go three times the distance without being tired, as you will see, and as for bad roads he is accustomed to them, and will go through places that would puzzle our fine English horses. You must be quite aware that a Scotch Highland

pony will carry you safely through a moor in his native country, where an English blood horse would be either stuck fast or smothered in the first ten minutes. So it is with the horses in this country ; the main roads are in general excellent, but the cross ones are disgraceful to a civilized land. My little friend here is well accustomed to them, not only here but also in Brittany, where they are even worse than those we shall see to-day ; you can ask the boy when we start, for a description of the roads in Brittany ; he is an intelligent little fellow, and can give you a very tolerable description of the country ; but don't let us waste time. Jump in."

Hope clambered round the wheel into the cabriolet, the boy holding down the end of the shaft and whistling to his horse. Cross followed and seated himself by his friend's side, and then the boy gave another whistle ; and let go the end of the shaft, which immediately rose up in a line with the horse's ears, and the cabriolet was only prevented from falling back with its load by the broad leather strap that passed under the horse's belly.

"This will never do," said Hope, "we shall be over in five minutes, for if we get a jerk going up hill we shall lift that little brute off his legs."

"No fear," answered Cross ; "wait till the boy is up and you will see that we make a splendid balance."

The boy sprang up, clawed up the reins, which were tied by a leather thong to the apron, gave a sort of squeal and cracked his whip, and the little horse dashed off at good ten miles an hour ; the cabriolet, when he was in his place, was so justly balanced, that a very few pounds' weight on the end of the shaft would turn it either up or down.

“There,” said Cross ; “did n’t I tell you how it would be. To do the French justice, there are no people in the world who understand loading a pair of wheels as well as they do. Their carriages in country places are abominable things to look at, but the large wheels and the way they are hung enable them to carry greater weights than we can contrive to stow on our smarter conveyances. Their horses also are much better than they look, but they are shamefully used, for, generally speaking, the French are not good to their beasts ; often, indeed, they treat them so brutally that I wish some French Martin of Galway would spring up and bring in a bill for the prevention of cruelty to animals ; even my little friend here, who is an exception to the general rule, and who really takes great care of his horse, will, before the day is over, swear every oath and call him every abusive name that you can find in the French language.”

As Cross said this, the lad turned down a narrow steep lane, just wide enough to admit the wheels of the carriage, wretchedly paved with round uneven stones, and with a gutter in the middle, down which the horse skated at the same rapid pace.

"Where the deuce are you going? go gently," said Hope.

"Don't be afraid," said the boy; "it's the shortest way, and Noir never falls."

Just as he spoke, the horse slid for a yard or two, but kept his legs like a cat; the boy, however, to prove the truth of what Cross had just said, immediately began a string of oaths, in which "sacré," "cochon," and "br-r-r-i-gand," were frequently heard. This continued till they had reached the bottom of the lane, making three very sharp turns before they regained the broad highway. Once more on the smooth road, the boy began to squeal and whistle to his beast, calling him by names of affection; then cracking his whip, he turned and looked back to his passengers, saying with a grin—

"Is he not a good beast my horse?"

"He seems so," answered Hope; "but you have a good way to go and you must not press him so hard."

"It is all down hill for the next mile, and we must make the most of the good road while we have it," said

the boy, as he gave another crack with his whip and whistle, while the little horse trotted briskly down the hill ; the road was good, and he went as firm as a rock without the slightest slip or stumble. When they reached the bridge at Pont Gilbert the boy pulled up on the centre. The water looked white and was covered with foam.

“ Look,” said the boy, “ the tide is up ; we shall have it very high to-morrow, since it is so high to-day. Did the gentleman ever see the tide come up ? Strangers think it curious, and the English often come here at spring tides to see the Great Wave.”

“ What does he mean ? ” asked Hope.

“ Why, the rise and fall of the tide along the whole of this coast is very great, being about forty-four feet at spring tides. It comes in very rapidly, and there are banks on the Grève which apparently retard the flow for a while, for all of a sudden you may see a sort of wall of water pass over them, and this rushes up in a mass two or three feet high, and roars up under the bridge. The mass of water, as it rolls along, gathers up the white muddy soil over which it passes, and it is that which makes it look so white, and the great force with which it comes, creates the foam with which you see it is now covered. The day after full and change of the moon

this wave comes up exactly at nine o'clock, and many people make it an object for a walk* to come here and see it pass."

"I daresay," said Hope, "it is well worth seeing if it is anything like a wave I once saw in the river Findhorn. I was fishing there. The day was cloudy, but we had no rain ; it had, however, rained very heavily in the hills. Fortunately I had a man with me who knew the river, for on a sudden I heard a sort of hollow roar of water, and I felt an increase of breeze coming down the river. 'Run for your life, and up the rocks,' roared my companion, and he dragged me away, not even allowing me to pick up my fishing-basket ; and as I saw him in such a desperate hurry and fright the panic seized me also, and I made the best use of both hands and feet in clambering up the steep face of the rock. I had not got up many steps when I heard a noise like thunder behind me. I turned and saw a wall of water tumbling along. I got one glimpse of my poor fishing-basket just as the wave reached it ; it was only a glimpse, for in the next moment the torrent was roaring six feet deep where it was lying, and where I had been standing a minute before. It was one of the grandest and most appalling sights I ever beheld, and I thought for many a day after, of what my companion said when the red furi-

ous stream splashed against the rocks close below our feet. ‘Whaur wad ye hae been if I hadna made ye rin?’ he said, as he pointed to a large rock that was rolling along before the torrent. Ah! where, indeed, thought I; and it made me think more seriously than any half-dozen of the best sermons I ever heard. This cannot be so grand a sight as that, but it may recall it to my memory, and I shall make a point of coming to see it before I leave the place. In the meantime let us go on.”

Crack went the whip, and away they trotted, keeping the same pace half-way up a long though not very steep hill.

“Go gently, my friend,” said Cross, “we see your beast is good, and in our country we say, never ride a willing horse too hard.”

“Ah, sir,” said the boy, “is he not a good beast? and now that there is no commerce, he keeps himself, my father, my mother, and me.”

“What do you mean by no commerce, my friend?” asked Hope.

“Why, sir, my father kept a cabaret, and my mother and I traded in fowls, ducks, pigeons, and game. I have a cart very light and very convenient, and, sometimes by myself, and sometimes with my mother, I went all over this country, and all over Brittany, to pur-

chase from the farmers and sportsmen their poultry and game, and we sold it again at a good profit in the town. But now nobody buys anything, and I don't know what they live on ; so my commerce is gone. I am obliged to let my horse to others, as I cannot use him for myself, and happily they know he is good, and he is seldom idle, which is fortunate, for my father is very ill, and my mother does not like selling cider to the people, for they talk so loud now, and make so much noise, that it makes my father worse, and then she scolds them, and they don't come to us as they used to do."

"How do you mean, my friend, that the people don't buy anything now ? surely people must eat now as well as formerly ?" said Hope.

"I suppose they must eat something, because they don't die," replied the boy ; "but they don't eat poultry and game, unless they can get it for less than I pay for it, and that won't do, you know. The farmers don't understand why the republic, that was to make them all so rich and happy, should make them sell their chickens and ducks for less money than they got when Louis Philippe was here ; then they have more taxes to pay—forty-five per cent more on the land—and (between us) they are wishing to have a king back again ; only don't repeat it, for they would send me to Mont St. Michel if

they knew that. I quite agree with them in thinking that if Louis Philippe was a tyrant, we have Henri Cinq or even Napoleon's nephew to make a king of ; and I believe that if we had a king again, they could sell their birds, and I could afford to buy them."

"So you are a royalist ? my little friend," said Hope ; "do you find that many of the farmers are of your opinion ?"

"Everybody almost wants some change ; for since the republic, every one is poorer than before. Some few wish to see a red republic, because they have nothing, and never had anything ; they say that they ought to have a share of other people's property. I don't know much of these people, for they never buy poultry or sell it, but I see them sometimes in the cabarets, and I hear what they say. There are not many of them, and everybody else is against them ; but still these are the people that talk the loudest, and make the greatest noise ; this keeps the proprietors in a state of alarm, and nobody buys anything, and when they sell anything, they hide their money. I hear that in England you have grand seigneurs who have thousands and thousands of acres that belong to them, and they have farmers to whom they let their land ; this is not so here. We have farmers like you, but not many, who pay rent. Almost

all our farmers have their own properties, which they cultivate, and a great many people have only a house and garden ; but this they do not wish to lose, or even to divide with the communists ; and when the friends of a red republic and the communists talk so loud in the cabarets, they are frightened that this division of property may take place, and they wish for a king to protect them, and act with firmness. Some, whose fathers were soldiers, or who served under the emperor themselves, wish for Napoleon's nephew ; others wish for Henri Cinq, but none of these speak out, for they will not trust each other ; they only complain, and say they wish for a change. I cannot tell you what change they would like, but I should like to have Henri for my king ; for the emperor was always having conscriptions ; and perhaps his nephew might like fighting, and making us fight all the world, as the great emperor did. Glory is a very fine thing, but I like commerce better."

"Bravo ! my little friend," said Hope. "I think your taste excellent, for it agrees with my own ; and if many of your countrymen think like you, your country will soon exceed all its former greatness."

"Not till they get a better mode of working their land," said Cross, "and till they find out that time is money. Just look at the crops on either side of the

road—how bad they are ; and yet, perhaps, there is no better land in Europe than that through which we are passing. Look at the ploughs, which only scratch, and do not plough the land. Draining or deep ploughing is never thought of, and the consequence is, that sixteen or twenty bushels an acre is a large crop with the farmers here, while with ordinary management the land would yield forty ; they have little or no green crop, consequently they have no manure ; their hay meadows are covered with rushes, and some with stagnant water ; in short, nothing can be worse than the agriculture of this country, and this is the more remarkable from the fact, that nothing can be better than the way in which they work their small gardens, from which the produce is enormous. Look, for instance, at this field, and at the garden taken off from it.”

Cross pointed to a house built in the corner of a field by the road-side, with a small garden behind and at one side of it. The garden was surrounded by a row of pear and plum trees, the branches of which were nearly breaking with the weight of fruit. The garden itself was crammed with most luxuriant vegetables, with French beans fourteen feet high, and loaded with pods, and with various sorts of cabbages of different ages ; the cottage walls were nearly hid by vines and apricot trees, also

laden with fruit. The field was divided into strips bearing various crops, like run-rig in the Highlands of Scotland ; the crops were wheat, oats, barley, buckwheat, and Siberian buckwheat, with two or three small patches of potatoes and beetroot, and all the crops were bad, and foul with weeds. The field was ploughed into ridges about five feet wide ; no pains had been taken to give a free run to the water, so that there was no crop in the furrows, which made the field look as if it was laid off with narrow paths at every five feet.

“Look at the difference,” said Cross, “between that garden and that field. The soil is the same ; the climate is the same ; and yet how different is the result in crop. The garden, luxuriant as it looks, is now bearing its second crop ; where the cabbages are growing so well, it has already produced beans and early potatoes ;—in short, the produce from these little spots is very great, while that from the field is comparatively nothing, and all owing to the difference of management. The gardens are thoroughly drained and trenched to a great depth, while the rich land in the field is sour with water, scratched with a plough, and never cleaned from weeds.”

“The difference is very marked, certainly,” said Hope ; “but where the deuce is the boy going ?”

This remark was made as the carriage turned into a narrow lane, the first fifty yards of which were tolerably smooth, and then the little horse suddenly plunged up to the shoulders into a hole, and drew the carriage after him, which sunk up to the naves of the wheels. "Allons, march, cr-r-r-r-é br-r-r-r-igand," said the boy, as the poor little beast scrambled out on the other side, and twisted a little to one side in dragging the carriage out gain.

"Where the devil ARE you going?" exclaimed Hope, who had received a good thump on the back when they sank into the hole.

"To Carolles, through St. Jean de Thomas," replied the boy, with perfect naïvete; "was not that where monsieur wished to go?"

"Certainly," said Hope, "but is there no other way but this?"

"Yes, sir," answered the boy; "there is another road, but it is not so good as this, indeed it is hardly safe."

"And pray do you call this safe?" said Hope, as one of the wheels sank into another hole—the carriage leaning over as if it never would again recover the perpendicular.

"Oh yes, sir, quite safe; carriages are never 'emptied' on this road, but they sometimes are on the other."

"Well, I'm only a passenger," said Hope, "but gently or I shall be pounded to a jelly."

"Don't be afraid," said the boy, and for the next quarter of a mile they jogged along in silence, twisting about to avoid the worst holes, and sometimes making the horse wade up to the shoulders through them, so as to allow the wheels to remain on the firmer ground.

"Hope," said Cross, "this reminds me of a Highland road in the West, where a friend of ours vowed that he once found a muddy man sounding a hole with the butt end of a driving whip. He asked him what he was doing, and he replied, 'Sir, I have found my hat, but I have lost a horse and gig somewhere here.'"

"Ah," said Hope, "there is a post-road in the north Highlands which runs for twenty miles along the bank of a lake. A lad who carried the letters up or down every day for some years was asked by a lowlander, who did not know the country, whether he rode or drove. 'Ride!' said the lad, grinning; 'there's pairts o't a man himsel' wull no be vary canny on;' and it was true, for in some places the path was hardly fit for anything but an active kid in good condition, and that 'road' was then the only land communication between the east and west of that part of Scotland, and the postman got small pay for 'travelling it.'"

"Do you see that château?" said the boy, turning round and pointing to a large house at a short distance from the track (for road we cannot call it).

Slush, slush went the two wheels into two holes, jerking the passengers out of their seats.

"Mind where you are going, said Hope, with an exclamation. "I wish you would look at the road and not at anything else; you have nearly bumped my inside out."

"Oh, by our Lady, yes!" said the boy; "but it is nothing; there we are out again. I beg your pardon, but I could not help asking you to look at that house, because it belongs to one of my best customers; but, poor gentleman, he cannot buy any more partridges, for some of the people in Paris who held his money are bankrupt, and they give him nothing, so he cannot afford to go shooting and buying partridges."

"He may not choose to buy your birds if he is poor," said Hope, "but why should he not shoot his own game if he likes? Powder and shot are not so dear as to prevent his taking a shot if he wishes it."

"Ah, you don't understand," said the boy; "monsieur is very generous, but he is a bad shot; every Sunday he went out shooting, and sometimes twice a week, but as he killed very little himself, and liked to make presents

of his game, he always sent word to me the day before, and I hid ten or twelve partridges and a hare or two, in places we agreed upon, and he picked them up. He paid me very well, and, to say the truth, he was right to do so, for I always gave him fresh birds, although sometimes I was obliged to go as far as Brittany to get them, when he wanted to have a good day."

The quiet way in which this explanation was given tickled Hope so much, that he quite forgot the badness of the road in the merry laugh it created. "Well," he said, after he had finished his laugh, "that is the best account of French sporting I ever heard—and is this the only way he can reach his house?"

"Yes," said Cross, "this is his only road, and they are certainly queer people. I once asked why he did not mend some of these holes. Two days of a horse and cart, with four men to fill and empty them, would make the road passable; but no—it was not his business—the commune were bound to mend the roads, and he would rather run the risk of breaking his carriage every day than mend the road for others."

"But why," said Hope, "does not some man of influence get all the country round to turn out for a day and mend the whole road? if this is the only way they have of going to market, it would be worth their while

to work for a month, instead of a day, and they would gain the whole value of their time."

"You are quite right," answered Cross; "but yet you cannot convince them of so plain a truth. Every farm, every hamlet, every commune is jealous of the other, and they would rather suffer any inconvenience themselves than put their hand to a work which would benefit their neighbours. The government of France have been shamefully negligent in attending to the minutiae of agriculture. Without the interference of government these improvements never will take place, and they are most short-sighted in not doing so, for nothing can be easier. As they have an army of official men scattered in every corner, they have only to issue an order to make these men call out every man without exemption to execute one or two days of statute labour, and you would have all these cross-roads at least in passable order and gain millions a year to the country; and here comes a proof—draw into the ditch, boy, and let this waggon pass."

The boy did as he was bid, and even then left barely room for the coming cart to pass. It was one of the long carts mounted on two enormous wheels, and drawn by two horses and three bullocks; a horse led, then came three bullocks, and a second horse in the shafts. It came rolling and plunging along the road like a boat

in a heavy sea. Immediately behind the cart rode four or five men, and a sack, about a quarter full, was placed behind each rider.

“What a nice smell of fruit,” said Hope.

“Yes,” said Cross ; “the cart is laden with fruit and the half of it is mashed to a jelly before it reaches Granville. I hear the people have made a great deal of money this year by their plums, and they would have made four times as much if they had but a road to convey them along ; as it is, three-quarters of the best of the fruit is mashed and is sold for half nothing to the pastry cooks to make into preserve.”

“And those people behind,” asked Hope, “what have they got in their sacks?”

“Oh, that is wheat or some other grain which they are carrying either to market or to the mill ; they seldom take more than two bushels at a time, which must cause a great deal of trouble and also great loss of money by the waste of time in taking so small a quantity to market every week, instead of taking a ton or two in a waggon. But one of the greatest faults they have in this country is, that they put their whole crop into barns. You will not see a single hay or corn stack. The inevitable consequence of which is, that unless the season is remarkably fine both hay and corn are apt to

be musty, and the expense of farm buildings is enormously and uselessly increased."

The cart was now alongside. Hope learned that the terms "sacré," "cochon," and "brigand," were common to both horses and horned cattle, for the driver gave one of the bullocks a kick with his heavy sabot that might have broken his ribs, and applied these terms of affection to the unfortunate beast. The smell of the fruit was very sweet, and the destruction was evident, for the juice was running through the baskets to the ground. These baskets were filled with apricots, green gages, and large blue plums, and were piled one over the other in the cart, which stopped as it came alongside the carriage.

"Will you sell some of your fruit to us?" asked Cross, making a bow to one of the men on horseback. He was dressed in a black velvet hunting-cap, a blue blouse, coarse woollen trousers, and sabots.

"The gentleman will do me much honour by taking as many as he pleases," said the farmer, making a bow and waving his hunting cap, as if he were the master of the buck-hounds receiving the prince. A quantity of fruit was selected from the different baskets and handed to the gentlemen; no payment would be accepted, the farmer declaring he was too much honoured by seeing them eaten.

Hope asked him if it would not be a good thing to have the road mended.

“Excellent,” answered the farmer; “and you will see in our commune we are doing something; but what is the use? for we have a league and a half to go through these holes, and therefore we only lose our time, as in the winter this road is quite impassable. To be sure this year we need not mind, for we shall have no cider; but, thanks to the Virgin, the plums and pears are famous, and we can get something for them before the bad weather comes on. I have the honour to wish the gentlemen good morning.” With another flourish of the cap and a low bow he rode on, and the boy set his horse in motion.

“How comes that old cock to wear a hunting-cap?” asked Hope; “he looks for all the world like a whipper-in gone mad.”

“Why,” answered Cross, “an English gentleman some years ago rode his horse over a district of this country for a match; he wore a jockey cap. Since then there have been races, at which, also, the riders were dressed as they are with us; so, by way of looking sporting, everybody who has a cart-horse to trot a match considers it right to wear a hunting-cap; and many who have no horse at all think it knowing to pretend that they have,

and find it cheaper to buy a cap than a horse. That old fellow is very well off, and really has horses, and good ones, for he generally wins the farmers' stake for trotting, and though he wears sabots and a blouse, he marks his love for the turf by sporting his hunting-cap on all occasions."

Use makes us accustomed to almost everything ; Hope, who was far from comfortable at first, got reconciled to his shaking when he saw that it was quite possible to go with one wheel up to the nave in a hole, and the other on the bank, without being upset, or "emptying" the carriage, as the boy expressed the process. So they jogged along, admiring the rich country, and bemoaning the ignorance of the people in not making more of it. They passed a small stream, on the banks of which a dozen very handsome women were washing clothes by hammering them on a stone with a wooden beetle.

"Hilloa," said Hope, "we have got into the land of beauty. I have not seen a good-looking woman since I have been in Normandy, and here we have a regular covey of beauties."

"Ah," answered Cross, "we are getting near St. Jean de Thomas, and these must have Granville blood in their veins. All the women there are handsome, although I agree with you in thinking that Normans in general are

not famed for good looks. They tell me the Granville people are of Spanish origin ; and their black eyes and graceful carriage confirm the supposition."

Five minutes more brought them to the top of a hill, and before them they saw the straggling village of St. Jean de Thomas buried in orchards, with a low well-wooded hill to the north, and a promontory stretching to the westward, which completely sheltered it from all winds but the south and the south-west. In the last direction stood Mont St. Michel, rising from its sandy bed and forming a marked and picturesque object in the distance.

"Faith," said Hope, "what a snug little place to spend the winter in ! it must be so warm ! and being so near the sea, and so well sheltered, I should say it must be a capital place for delicate lungs."

"I am afraid not," answered Cross, "for, from the want of draining, the flats to the south are a perfect marsh during winter, and I hear there are often agues in consequence ; besides which there is not a decent house in the village. You may see the best, and judge if an English family would put up with such accommodation in a place which is inaccessible in the winter. Such a spot in England, with such shelter and so much beauty, would be converted into a little paradise ; but we must

wait a while before we see the capital expended here which would be necessary to drain the bottom and build houses fit for English Christians to live in. Some of our countrymen, and many rich French people, do come here and rough it for a few weeks, for the sake of sea-bathing, and almost every house has its lodgers."

They were now crawling into the village; the road allowed no faster pace. The houses stood detached from each other in their gardens, where the trees were loaded with fruit of all sorts, and they looked gay and pretty as the bright sun shone on the many colours which the fruit-trees and house-leeks gave to their fronts and roofs. All the houses were either thatched or covered with shingle; there was not a slate in the whole place.

"The ladies are come in from bathing," said the boy, "so the tide must be a good way out."

"How do you know?" asked Hope; the boy had spoken to no one.

The boy pointed with his whip to the various doors as they passed, and at each there hung at least one pair of blue trousers and a short blue blouse. They swung in the gentle breeze, being suspended by a string, and having a stick stuck into the waistband to keep them open.

"Whatever they do in the rest of France," said Hope, "I see the ladies wear the breeches here."

“Yes,” answered Cross; “there are no bathing machines, so the ladies, both here and at all these small bathing-places, walk down in the dresses you see, and put them off when wet either in small sheds or on the open beach. The dress has a great advantage over the bathing-gown of England, for it allows the ladies to swim, which many of them do very well.”

After passing through the greater part of the village, the carriage was pulled up at the entrance to a yard, and the two friends alighted.

“As we must rest the horse here for a little, you may as well look at the house,” said Cross; “you will see the sort of way in which people live here. An English family have hired this one, which is one of the best in the place, and are to be here in a day or two; but as it is empty at present we can see everything without interfering with any one. He led the way, and Hope followed, into a dirty court-yard. The house stood before them, covered, like all those they had passed, with vines and apricot trees. Over the door was a branch of the apricot loaded with its rich yellow fruit, and round all the windows hung numberless bunches of grapes, still small and green; the roof was partly of thatch, partly shingle, but all covered with parasitical plants, the varied colours of which, with the festooning of the



vines, gave a very picturesque look to the building. Two sides of the court were surrounded with offices, the lower storeys of which were used as drinking places, or as stables and cow-byres ; the upper were used as barns, and many of them were now filled with hay. In the centre of this yard rose a mound from which grew a beautiful walnut tree that gave promise of a most abundant crop, and its rich green foliage might have afforded a delicious shade to the inhabitants of the house could they have approached it dryshod ; but this was out of the question, for all the dirty water from the houses, and the drippings from a spring, ran into the hollow space between it and the buildings, causing a mass of dirty and unsavoury mud, which spread so near the house that there was only a narrow path left between it and the mud. This mud, unsavoury as it was, was useless even for manure, for the spring running into it washed away whatever might be valuable for enriching the farm, and the road into the yard was the drain along which this filthy stream found a vent. Behind, and to the right of the house, was the garden, shewing the same extraordinary luxuriance of vegetation, both in fruit and vegetables, which was remarked of all the gardens they had passed. While they were looking at what we have just described, a woman came out of the

house bearing two large brass pans, which she filled at the spring, the overflow from which, as we have before described, ran through the yard. As this spring rose considerably above the level of the house, twenty feet of pipe would have brought an abundant supply of water to the kitchen, and the same length of drain would have carried off the superabundant water, thus saving constant labour to the servants and rendering the place clean, tidy, and wholesome.

“Talk of French civilisation,” said Hope; “I will be hanged if this does not beat Celtic indolence. You may see the same sort of carelessness among the lowest orders of Welsh, Irish, and Scottish Highlanders, but not among the better class. The proprietor of this place, you told me, is rich, is in the employment of the government, and considers himself enough of a gentleman to call me out, if I told him what I think of his dirt and ignorance.”

“C'est la mode du pays,” answered Cress; “and as we are not their schoolmasters, we must take them as we find them; but now for the house.”

The kitchen had two doors, entering directly from the yard, without any porch; it formed the whole lower part of the house, being about thirty-five feet long by thirty wide. In front of the door by which they entered

were two beds, beautifully clean, with gay patch-work quilts spread over them. These beds were sunk into the wall, and had a large cupboard between them, which served as a sort of pantry for containing provisions. On the left were two windows, and between them a rack filled with plates and dishes, with a long table below nearly as long as the room ; another long table stood in the centre of the kitchen, and at this a woman was employed in shredding the leaves of some cabbages for making soup. As she cut them she pulled a string which ran through a small pulley on the ceiling, the other end of the string being fixed to a basket in the shape of a flat bee-hive, neatly made of very close wicker-work. When the string was pulled it raised this basket, and within, or rather below it, stood one of the large brass pans she had just filled at the spring. Into this pan she threw the cabbage leaves as they were cut, a quantity of other vegetables being already there ; it looked very clean and bright. There were two other baskets exactly of the same form and similarly arranged, standing at equal distances on the table.

“What is the use of these baskets ?” asked Hope.

“Don’t you see ?” answered Cross ; “they serve as dish-covers to keep off the flies and dust, which they do admirably ; and the same plan would be of great use in

our best kitchens, for it is very handy and highly effective. The dinner as it is prepared is left under these baskets till it is time to place it on the fire, and when it is dished it is again put there till served on the table, by which means no flies or dust can ever touch the food."

"Well," said Hope, "it is always more agreeable to praise than censure, and as I have been abusing the dirty yard, I am delighted to be able to praise what I now see, for it certainly gives an air of great cleanliness. And this cabbage soup—is it good? I have heard much of it, but never have tasted it."

"Its goodness is a matter of taste," replied Cross. "I like it myself, and it must be very nutritious, for many a strong fellow eats nothing else but this soup and bread. It is very much the same as that which Soyer has been making for the Irish. After the cabbage has been boiled for a considerable time, some bits of bread and onions, fried in butter or fat, are added to the soup, and it is ready; or they begin with the grease and onions, then add the cabbage and water, and when it has boiled for a good while they throw in the slices of bread, and serve. If the peasantry look dirty in their persons, they are never so in their cookery or their beds; in these departments they are scrupulously clean. Their bed and table

linen is coarse, but very nice, and they have a great quantity of it ; for here, as in Scotland, they consider a large quantity of linen as a mark of respectability and wealth."

"Well," said Hope, "that knowledge must always be a great comfort to a stranger visiting the country ; for a man may bear a great deal of untidiness out of doors and will put up with very humble fare when he is sure that that fare is clean, and that he will have a good bed on which to stretch his limbs at night. I like their fire-place, too, for it reminds me of the comforts of the old English farm-house." As he spoke he pointed to the right side of the room where the fire-place was built, projecting into the room, with a settle on either side of the fire, which burnt under the large open chimney. The fire was small, of wood burning on dogs, with a large heap of ashes ranged round it. "They could not cook much dinner at such a fire as that," said Hope.

"I beg your pardon," said Cross, "for there you are wrong; you would be astonished to see the number of dishes they can cook at that little fire, with the assistance of the charcoal stoves, which you see in the dresser."

"Charcoal stoves?" said Hope ; "I don't see any."

"Look here," said Cross ; and they went to the long table against the wall in front of one of the windows.

They there saw four holes, six inches square, lined with brick, and having a small iron grating at the bottom ; some Dutch tiles were let into the table around the holes.

“Do you call those stoves?” asked Hope.

“Faith do I,” answered Cross, “and each of them will dress you a dish fit for a king. These holes are filled with charcoal, and a pan placed over them, standing on a low trivet, so that a very small quantity of fuel gives ample heat to dress most excellent dishes. I assure you our countrywomen might take useful lessons from the women here in economy of fuel in their kitchens. Let us look at what they can do with these small holes in a table, and that small fire.

“First then, these stoves will give you four entrées for your first course, and as many for your second ; then on the fire they hang the pot for the soup, which is kept warm in the hot ashes ; when it is taken off, vegetables and fish take its place ; in the front they can roast as well as we can with our large coal fires ; and then they have also a contrivance which I would fain see introduced into the Irish and Scottish cottages, where peat is burnt, for peat embers would be as good as the wood embers used here. The contrivance I allude to is this, it is called a ‘four de campagne.’”

Cross pointed to a circular iron box, which looked like a bushel measure, standing with the mouth downwards, and having a projecting rim about four inches broad, fixed on to the bottom.

“What is the use of that?” asked Hope.

“Why, it makes a very good substitute for an oven ; it will bake rolls, tarts, and pies remarkably well. The dish is put down on a trivet, which is placed on the hot stones close to the fire ; this ‘four’ is then put over it, the hot embers are piled around it, and the top is also filled to the upper part of the rim with embers. Whatever is placed inside is baked nearly as well as in an oven. They are very cheap, being made of thin sheet iron ; and if our people had them, and would learn to use them, they would be of great use. Many a nice little dish might a wife prepare to greet her husband’s return after a hard day’s work, and with no trouble, for, once put in order, they require very little looking after ; and they will cook best exactly the sort of dishes which are within the reach of a Highland peasant, such as fish pies, bacon and potatoes, or eggs, fish, butter, and potatoes, beat into a pudding.”

“If these things will do all you say,” answered Hope, “you are quite right, and if we understand out-of-doors-work better than the French, I see we may learn a great

deal from their indoor habits ; but here is a regular girdle, like what the Irish and Scottish peasants use for making oat cakes."

"You are right," said Cross, "and they use it for nearly the same purpose. They do not make oat cakes, it is true ; but they make a sort of scones of the flour of the buckwheat, which are called gallets ; they are made exactly like oat cakes, and when you taste them you will allow they are very good."

"Well, as you command the commissariat, if you produce them as part of your stores, I shall devour, and report my opinion ; in the meantime, let us see the rest of the house."

On the same side of the room as the door by which they entered rose a steep wooden stair. It began and wound round to the same side as the fire-place, and under this staircase was a third bed, as clean as the other two. They mounted the steps and entered the upper room through a door at the top. This apartment was the same size as the lower room, and had a second staircase to ascend to the upper storey. It resembled the kitchen, with this difference, that the staircase out of the second room was hid from view by wooden panels, while in the kitchen it was open, having only a hand-rail. A portion of this upper room was also cut

off by a wooden partition, which concealed three bed-places which exactly resembled three state-rooms in a steamboat. The furniture was primitive enough, but the room looked gay with the scarlet and white curtains that hung round the windows, and the beds, like the others, were beautifully clean. This, however, was the whole accommodation of the best house in the village ; for the upper flat was only a granary and store-room, and was full of lumber, and casks containing various kinds of grain.

“For a family,” said Hope, “this is no great things, but in a sporting country two or three men might get on famously. Is there any shooting here?”

“Shooting you can hardly call it, for everybody carries a gun. If you or I were to shoot a sparrow in the hedge, we should forthwith be asked to produce our *porte d’armes* ; but they are not so strict with each other. Every one, therefore, shoots, and of course the game cannot be plentiful. Still there are a sprinkling of hares and partridges ; and in the beginning of the season you may always pick up a few brace of birds. In the winter, I hear there are always woodcocks and snipes, and quantities of shore-birds, such as curlews and dottrel. There are ducks in the streams, and there are large flocks of widgeon on the Mare de Bouilon. Of the winter

shooting I can only speak from hearsay, for the roads here are then quite impassable. If you have seen enough of the house, we may as well take a look at the ruin of an old castle on the hill. There is not much to see in the ruin itself, but the view from it is worth looking at ; and the castle they say was once a stronghold of the Montgomeries."

Hope expressed his willingness to go wherever he was led ; so they started up a little steep track to the shoulder of the hill, where they found very small remains of what had once been a place of strength, and had been the home of the mighty dead. The building greatly resembled in structure some of the old forts in the West Highlands of Scotland. There were the ruins of the same sort of square tower, forming one quarter of a quadrangle of lower buildings ; but little remained, and that little would soon vanish, for all the walls were too much undermined to continue long standing. The situation must have been chosen before the use of artillery was known, for as a place of strength it would be useless in modern days, being commanded by higher ground on three sides ; but these heights added greatly to its comfort and beauty as a residence, for, in the way of comfort, they sheltered it from all winds but the south, and being covered with walnut, chestnut, and

oak trees, their rich and varied foliage tended greatly to increase its beauty. Below the hill lay the village buried in its gardens and orchards, and further off stretched the rich and wooded plain through which they had passed ; while on the right was the sea, with Mont St. Michel rising against the blue horizon, and the shore of Brittany in the extreme distance. The view was certainly lovely.

Hope shewed his admiration by exclaiming, “ What a paradise of a place might a man make here with taste and money ! ”

While they were thus standing and gazing before them, a hoopoe lit on a green knoll, the debris of a portion of the fallen ruin ; he was close to them, and as he spread his crest in the sun, the colours shewed bright on the beautiful little bird.

“ Bless me ! ” said Hope, “ there is a hoopoe ! I never saw one alive before.”

“ They are common enough in this country,” answered Cross ; “ and if you listen you may hear the note of another very pretty bird that is uncommon in England—I mean the oriole ; there are great numbers of them here. Their note in the earlier part of the year is most pleasing ; I like it better than that of almost any other bird, though it has not the charm of the nightingale,

which sings when all else is still. The nest of both birds is curious. I have never seen it mentioned in any book of natural history, but I have remarked that the hoopoe lines its nest with the nastiest filth, and the smell is abominable. The instinct that dictates this I cannot explain, unless the fermentation of the filth keeps up the warmth in the eggs when the bird is off the nest. Everybody knows that if you clean out your pigeon-house you will have no young pigeons, but a hoopoe requires something nastier still than its own dung with which to line its nest."

"Your remark," said Hope, "is curious ; seeing these pretty birds and watching their habits, gives a further charm to such a place as this."

"I agree fully in your remark," answered Cross ; "for a lover of natural history may find amusement in almost any place, and the study of nature's works is so absorbing, that if once begun, it will make many an hour pass lightly that otherwise might hang heavily on our hands. Birds, beasts, and insects too, are most abundant and most varied in such places as this, for the beauty which wood, hill, and water give to our eyes, affords the shelter and food necessary for the support of animal life. But I see troops of people wending to the shore. We are come to look at the fishing, not to prose

about natural history, so if you have seen enough of the view, let us go down and see what the fishermen are about—first securing our quarters for the night. The horse must be now rested, and it will not take us long to reach Carolles.”

CHAPTER IV.

STRAND FISHING, ETC.

FROM the height where they stood, the line of road leading to the shore was partially visible. It wound along the bottom of the hill, edged with a fringe of fruit-trees, through the spaces of which, groups of men, women, and children were seen all hastening in the same direction. All carried baskets on their left shoulders, and many bore nets which were rolled round poles about eight or nine feet long.

“Come along,” said Cross, “the tide is far enough out now ; and if you make haste you will see all the different modes of fishing on the shore.” He led the way as he spoke, directing his course down a steep path, which passed through a bank of dwarf whin to the road below. Just as they entered the whin cover, a covey of twenty-three partridges rose at their feet ; the young birds were well grown, but still they were of such an age that it was impossible for a sportsman to mistake the old birds —of these there were two, and twenty-one young ones.

“ Bless my heart,” said Hope, “ there is a fine covey ! it is the largest I ever saw ; if the birds breed in that fashion in this country, they ought to have the finest shooting in the world.”

“ *Ought* is a very fine word,” answered Cross ; “ but where every man carries a gun, and where, in spite of the laws to the contrary, little or no respect is paid to close-time, it is quite impossible for game to be plentiful ; if the ground was at all preserved, it might easily be so, for these large coveys are by no means rare. Last year, very near this place, I found one that had twenty-four birds, being one more than that we have just seen. The great quantity of buckwheat which is grown here, is the only thing that prevents the total extermination of game ; for the people are furious at any person going through this crop. It is always sown late, and is never cut till the middle or end of September ; consequently, the birds, who have the instinct to know where they are safe, always take to the fields of buckwheat the moment they are sprung, and their persecutors dare not follow them there. A certain number thus escape and supply breeding birds for next year. I believe it is this same buckwheat, or sarrasin, as it is here called, which renders them so prolific ; for, in harvesting this grain, a great deal is shaken and falls to the ground, which gives

considerable feeding during the autumn and winter. There is also another variety of buckwheat which is grown here ; the peasants call it Siberi, being a contraction of Siberian buckwheat. This they grow for the feeding of their poultry and pigs, and excellent food it seems to be, for the fowls lay an immense quantity of eggs ; and I believe it is from this feeding that the poultry acquires the flavour which I have heard you praise so much. This grain gives food to game very early in the year ; I have remarked that in the corn fields, its grains are perfectly formed and full by the first week in May ; and I own I have often felt astonished that in our own country, where we think ourselves so learned in the art of rearing game, this Siberian buckwheat has never been introduced ; if it has been I have never seen it."

"What is its peculiar advantage ?" asked Hope.

"Why," answered Cross, "I have already told you, that the grain is fit for food in the first week in May—very shortly after they have sown their oats and barley—these are the crops that are generally sown after buckwheat, or this Siberi. A few grains of buckwheat always spring up the second year ; but in a crop after Siberi, Siberi still seems to be the only crop sown, so great is the quantity that comes up. However severe



the winter, it appears never to injure the vegetative powers of this hardy grain ; indeed, where once sown, it becomes a perfect weed and sticks in the ground with as much pertinacity as wild mustard. As poultry and game seem to prefer it to any other food, and as it is always either growing, or lying on the fields, I think it would be invaluable to our game preservers."

"Well," said Hope, "it is not a bad wrinkle, and I thank you for the hint. I will take a parcel of the seed with me, and enlighten my sporting friends when I go home. But whom have we here? I did not know that your fishermen wore such smart black mustaches."

This remark was made as they reached the road ; for while Cross had been lecturing on the merits of Siberi, they had continued their progress down the hill, and when Hope declared his intention of enlightening his sporting friends in England on the subject, they had arrived at the hedge that lined one side of the way. About twenty yards from the place where they stood, Cross saw five men advancing from the town. They were all dressed very much alike, namely, in blue trousers and jackets. Two of the party wore old straw hats, that looked as if they had been stolen from some scarecrow ; the other three had on foraging caps, that had certainly seen good service ; none of the party wore stockings ;

some had wooden sabots, the others, shoes to match the hats and caps. Each of them carried a good-sized basket fixed on the left shoulder, and these were roughly but very closely plaited. The man who led the way had on his right shoulder a net with very small meshes, which was twisted round two poles about eight feet long, and at the end of each of these poles was fixed the curved end of a sheep's horn, the outer side of which was polished quite smooth. The remaining four followed in pairs; they too had nets and poles, but only one net and one pair of poles to each couple. The ends of the poles rested on their shoulders, and a considerable quantity of net was rolled round the centre, the weight of which was divided between the two; the ends of these poles were also covered with a bit of horn, and as they walked the clink of a chain could be heard, keeping time to the sound of their steps, and mingling with their laughter and conversation. The mouths of all were garnished with fierce black moustaches, and cigars in full smoke. Ten seconds brought this party in line with the gap in the hedge where Cross and Hope were standing. An instantaneous halt took place, and a shout from the whole voices at once of, "Ah, my dear Cross! here you are! how happy I am to see you. When did you arrive?"

Cross returned the greeting of his friends, and told them that he was shewing the country to his friend Hope, whom he begged to make known to them, and whose great object, he mentioned, was, among other sights, to see the mode of fishing practised in Normandy.

“Then, pray come with us,” said the gentleman who was leading when they came in sight, “pray, come with us ; we are going to fish ; you will bring us good fortune and shall share our spoil.”

Cross explained that they must first return to the village, to give directions about their conveyance, and secure quarters at Carolles, where they meant to stay if they could find apartments.

“Don’t let that prevent your joining us,” said the gentleman who wore the worst of the two shocking bad hats ; “I am at Carolles, and if a double-bedded room will serve you, there is the best in the town now vacant, for our friends Adolph and George René have this moment told me that they must return to Rennes, and have charged me to arrange with our landlord, and intimate their departure. My servant will be here in a second, and I will make him secure the room for you, and your boy can drive him there, if that will suit you.” Cross looked at Hope, and receiving a nod of assent, he at once

accepted the proposal, and then more formally presented his friend to the party. Hope was somewhat surprised to find that the wearers of the straw hats were gentlemen of the best families in Normandy ; and of the other three, two were officers in a cavalry regiment, and the third a gentleman whom he had often heard mentioned as one of the most agreeable people in the district. Four of them were quartered in the village ; the other, as we have already mentioned, was at Carolles ; they were there to take the baths, as they said, meaning thereby, swimming for an hour while the tide was in, and wading in pursuit of prawns and small soles for two or three hours whenever the tide was out.

As the Marquis de —— had promised, his servant joined them almost immediately ; he received the joint instructions of his master and Cross, and when he turned to execute them, the whole party started for the shore.

Hope took his place by the side of the Marquis de ——, and Cross walked in front with the Baron de ——.

Hope, while he talked with the Marquis, had his eye fixed on the coil of net that wound round the poles, the ends of which were resting on the shoulders of the Marquis and his companion, one of the cavalry officers ; the clinking of the chain caught his ear again, and on

looking he saw that a considerable quantity was twisted in the net, and a number of loops hung on either side of the pole, which was shaken by the motion of the bearers, and one loop striking against the other, caused the sound which he heard.

“What do you expect to catch to-day?” asked Hope of the Marquis.

“The same as usual,” he replied; “bouquets, chevrettes, crabs, and soles.”

“What are bouquets and chevrettes?” asked Hope.

“The Marquis spoke a little English, so he answered, “bouquets are what you call prawns; chevrettes are shrimps; in Paris and in most parts of France, prawns are called salicoques, and shrimps crevettes, but here they bear the names of bouquets and chevrettes; crabs and soles of course you know.”

“And is it with the same net that you catch all these varieties?”

“Oh yes, the same net will catch them all. We have a great variety of nets, but all work for the same end. For example, you see my friend has one different from ours—every one to his taste. He likes to have a net that he can manage himself, for he likes to work round the rocks, as he says the prawns are largest there and I like to fish with the one we are carrying, because

I know we always catch more than he does, and I am very sceptical as to his getting the largest ; and beside the two which you see, the women have nets like those which I saw for catching shrimps in England. There is also another sort which has two poles ; they are joined in the centre with an iron pin, and open and shut like a pair of scissors ; a net is fixed to one of the ends of this cross, and when they wish to use it, these scissors are opened so as to stretch the net quite tight, and a cross bar is fixed, which keeps it in that position ; this done, the women push the net before them in the same way that they do in your country.”

“What difference is there between the net you now describe and the one which Monsieur le Baron is carrying ? I see it has two poles.”

“Why, this—the poles are not joined, and the net is much wider ; it requires a good deal of strength to keep them well open, and then they are about eight feet wide. They are kept open when on the flat sand, but when going through narrow places in the rocks, the fisherman has the power of contracting the width to suit the size of the channel through which he wishes to pass.”

“And the horns fixed on to the ends of the poles, of what use are they ?”

“If the points of the poles were left bare, they would

be constantly catching against every small stone, or sticking in the sand ; these curved horns slip smoothly along the bottom, and prevent a great deal of hard labour."

"And what sort of net have you got? it seems a great deal larger."

"Oh, mine is the net! for, although it is hard work to use it, still it catches so much more that the extra labour is well paid for. This net is ten yards wide. My friend takes one pole and I the other, and we march along, sweeping ten yards at once, instead of eight feet."

"And what is the use of that chain which is hanging in festoons below the pole?"

"Oh, the chain? I should hardly have thought you need inquire. Soles, shrimps, and prawns all sink themselves into the sand, and they require to be scratched, to make them jump; with a long net like this, they would lie still and allow the net to pass over them, we should catch hardly anything without the chain, but it scratches the sand, and everything that is started falls back, and we are sure to find it in the bag which trails behind."

"But why these festoons?"

"The festoons are everything. In the first place, they help to make the bag which holds the fish; in the

second, if the chain was straight, a good deal of the fish would pass below it, which they cannot do when it hangs in loops; and last of all, it prevents the net from rolling. You must be aware that, in shallow water, in dragging a net which has the common rope and lead to sink it, the net rolls, and you lose all your fish; but when it is fixed to a small chain, and is arranged in loops, or festoons, as you call it, the net never rolls; indeed it is quite impossible for it to do so."

"But how do you contrive to preserve the form of these loops, for they must become straight as you drag it along?"

"Not at all. The net is made wider before it is finished than when it is set in. For instance, this net and chain are fourteen yards long when straight, but we can only sweep ten yards with it, now that it is finished. I will describe the way in which it is arranged for use. A net fourteen yards long, having a purse in the centre, is fixed to a small chain, also fourteen yards long: you then take a strong cord, or small rope, and stretch it very tight, and mark it off with thirty marks, each mark exactly a foot apart. The centre of the chain is then fixed to the centre of this cord; this done, you measure two feet of the chain on either side, and fix the places so measured to the first one-foot mark on either side of the

centre. This of course makes a bow or loop in the chain one foot wide and six inches deep ; you then continue working on, measuring a certain quantity of chain, and fixing each bit, as it is measured, to one of the marks on the cord, till the whole is fastened. I ought to tell you that the quantity of chain measured is lessened each time ; for instance, the two centre loops are two feet, those next them are twenty-two inches, the third twenty, the fourth nineteen, and so on, gradually diminishing an inch each loop till the whole is finished. The cord and the chain are then made fast to the bottom of the poles as you see, and the ends of the net are also stretched, and attached to them ; and then the top line is fastened three feet from the bottom, and you have a net ten yards long, fit for work. All this you will see when we begin to work, and will understand the process much better by one glimpse than by a day's explanation."

" I think I understand it," said Hope, " but I shall be all the wiser when I see the nets in operation."

At this moment a number of young girls ran past them ; they were laughing merrily, though their clothing was of the lightest. All of them had the universal baskets fixed on their left shoulders ; some of them held in their hands forked sticks, some a long iron crook, .

some hand-nets in the shape of a racket, and some had nothing at all but nature's weapons.

"What are these?" asked Hope, "and where are they going?"

"Fishers going to fish, like ourselves," answered the Marquis.

"And what do they expect to catch?" said Hope.

"Those strong girls with the forked sticks are the boldest fishers here ; they go farther out than any of us ; they are going in search of oysters, which they find in the beds of sea-grass. They wade up to their waists, and raise the oysters very dexterously with those sticks. The younger girls with the hand-nets are going in search of prawns, and sometimes they take a great many. When the tide goes out, there are a number of cracks and holes in the rocks, which remain full of water. Some of these are of considerable depth, and these girls wade through them, and scrape the sides and bottoms with those small nets : if there is a prawn in the hole, they are sure to catch him. Though either you or I would not get a dozen in a day, these monkeys will half fill their baskets before the tide turns."

"And these with the iron crooks, what are they?"

"They are crab hunters : they, like the girls with the hand-nets, search the holes in the rocks ; they either

know the holes well, or have much better eyes than I have ; for you will see them presently dragging the crabs and spider crabs from their hiding holes with great success ; and if you like to try your hand at it, I will back any one of them to catch a score for every one you take."

"And these little things ? are they going to fish, or do they only go to carry what the others take ?"

"Oh no ; they do not carry for others ; they are going on their own account, and will have as good a back-load as any of the others. They are cockle-pickers, and even in that there is a great art, for, till you are taught, you would not find one, though these little brats may be filling their baskets all round you."

"I know that trade," said Hope ; "I have learned to know a cockle's eye from practising in Scotland, and I don't think they would beat me much there. Have you any razor fish on this coast ? for I have been taught how to see them too, which is a more difficult accomplishment."

"I have never seen any of them taken," said the Marquis, "although I am sure there must be plenty, for the coast is covered with their shells."

"Well, I will try my hand at it some day, if I stay here ; and if I succeed," said Hope, "I shall be able to

teach these poor little girls a new mode of filling their baskets."

Thus talking, they reached the strand, and began picking their way towards the rocky point that stretched a good way out to sea.

"We are in capital time," said the Marquis, "for the point is not dry yet, and we shall have the first of this ground, though they have been at work for an hour to the westward."

The promontory along which they were moving rose to a considerable height, and from the base of the cliff low rocks projected for some distance into the sandy waste; to the southward, the strand was exposed for a great distance, shewing how far the tide had already fallen, and groups of figures could be seen scattered along the shining surface of the wet sand. The figures were clearly defined even up to the base of the rock where Mont St. Michel lifts his lofty aged head. Although those in the distance seemed mere specks, yet in the bright sunlight and on the glittering expanse they were so clearly marked that Cross declared he could distinguish the universal basket on their shoulders, and could tell who were using nets and who were gathering oysters.

The whole party stepped briskly along the sand

skirting the projecting rocks, till they came nearly to the point of the promontory ; and there the waves still rippled against the rocks, so that it was necessary either to mount these, or to take to the water and wade.

“There is no use, gentlemen, in getting wet just now,” said the Marquis, “as you have no nets to keep you in exercise ; the water is still pretty deep at the point, so I advise you to go along the rocks—there is a view worth seeing when you get to the end. You can look at that, and we will join you on the other side and shew you what we get, for we will not lift the nets till we come to you.”

“I must have a look at your nets and see you start,” said Hope, “and then we will follow your advice.”

The Baron took his net from his shoulders, unwound it, and opened it to its full width. His elbows he placed against his sides, and grasped the poles about three feet from the upper end, sunk his hands on a level with his hips, holding the net tightly stretched and open, while the upper end of the poles nearly met behind him. He was ready in a moment, and marched into the water, pushing his net before him, and keeping as close as he could to the heel of the projecting rocks. The Marquis and his companion also unwound their net, so that Hope saw it exactly as it had been described ; each took a

pole and advanced into the water, pushing the pole before them, and by leaning in opposite directions, keeping the net stretched to its utmost extent. Hope had kept his eye on the proceedings of the Marquis, and had not observed what the other two gentlemen were doing, but he now saw them trudging into the water in exactly the same manner as the Marquis and his friend, and was aware that there was no difference in the mode of proceeding. The Baron, with his single net, as we have already said, kept close to the heel of the rocks ; the others kept further out, the Marquis and his friend taking the outside, and in two minutes they were all toiling along up to their waists in the water.

When they were once started, Cross and Hope mounted the rocks and proceeded in the same direction.

There was a good deal of short seaware growing, which was very slippery, so that they were obliged to pick their steps and tread only on the bare spaces. By attention to this it was very easy to walk, although the surface was very rugged and broken, for the bare rocks looked like a continuation of immense sponges, which slightly broke under their feet as they walked, giving them so firm a hold that to slip was impossible if they avoided the seaware.

“What rum-looking rocks!” said Hope. “I wish I

had a hammer ; I should like to take a bit home and examine it more closely, for it is like Madrepore or coral rocks."

"Never mind the rocks just now," said Cross ; "you can get a bit of that at any time, and it would not be fair to detain our friends, as they have promised not to empty their nets till we join them."

Hope walked on, still keeping his eyes on the rocks at his feet, till he was roused by a merry shout of laughter close to him. They had just passed over a ridge rather higher than any they had yet seen, and had come unexpectedly on some of the party of girls who had passed them on the road. These were the crab-hunters, and the girls with the hand-nets.

When Hope looked up he saw that the rocks were now flatter, but were broken up by crevices of various depths, from ten to fifty yards long and of irregular breadth, rarely, however, exceeding six feet. In these crevices the girls were wading ; some whisking their little nets rapidly along the bottom or weed-befringed sides, tossing whatever they caught into their baskets ; while others were moving along more slowly, carefully lifting the weed, and poking their iron hook into every hole. When Hope had raised his eyes, he saw that the laugh had been created at the expense of one of these

crab-fishers, who had been so much occupied in searching a split in the rock that she had forgotten that she was standing at the edge of a very deep hole, into which she had slipped ; she was laughing with the rest, though up to her arms in the water. "It is nothing, it is nothing," she said ; "see what a fine one I have got ; and these gentlemen, I am sure, will buy it ; it is a real good one, and so heavy." She stretched out her hand, in which she held the large spider crab which she had just taken, and which had made her forget the deep pool.

"We will come back to you presently," said Cross, "and perhaps buy your crabs, but we have not time just now : " then calling to Hope, he continued, "we must get on or they will be round the point before us."

Cross led the way, and Hope followed. Half a minute more spent in walking brought them to the point, and when they had clambered up a steep ledge the view opened upon them. On this side, as on the other, they saw an immense expanse of wet shining sand ; but here several masses of flat red-looking rocks broke the sameness of the view, and several hundred men, women, and children were seen, either wading in the distant blue water, or scattered over the rocks or on the sand. In the far west were the rocks of Chausey ;

and in front was another promontory, on which stood the town of Granville—the spire of the church, the barracks, and the houses in the old town forming a broken sky line—while the masts of the ships in the harbour could be distinctly seen cutting against the houses in the lower part of the town. The sea was dotted with the white sails of many of the three-masted luggers which the fishermen of Granville use for trawling. The day was so bright and beautiful that even an uglier scene would have seemed fair; and now there was so much life and movement, that Hope would fain have paused to look and admire for a while a panorama that gave him so much pleasure, but Cross hailed him again, and pointed to their friends, who were nearly round the point; so on they went as fast as the nature of the ground would permit them, and arrived at the edge of the water just as the fishermen reached the land.

“Very good,” said the Baron, examining his net; “I have some famous ones; there is nothing like the single net when it is well handled.”

“Capital! capital!” said the Marquis, who had shortened the net, and who was now looking into the bag which he carried in his hand. “Bah! don’t talk of your single net—look here!”

“And look here,” said the other couple, who were

shaking the contents of their bag into the flat portion of the net.

Hope and Cross did look, and saw that in each net there was a considerable quantity of prawns, shrimps, soles, and a few crabs. Many of the prawns were extremely large, and the shrimps were very fine. The crabs were rather larger than a man's fist; the soles were all small, none being larger than a man's hand, and many not half that size, but there were a great many of them.

"Mine are decidedly the finest," said the Baron, who looked somewhat vexed at discovering that the double-handed nets had certainly caught four times as much as he had.

"Never mind who has the best," said the Marquis; "let us sort the fish and be off; we shall have both good and plenty if we do not waste our time."

"Yes, yes," cried the rest; "we shall have a capital day; so to work."

The best of the soles were selected and emptied into one basket, the crabs were put into another, and then the prawns and shrimps were thrown together into the other empty ones. The Baron insisted on keeping his own apart, to prove that he had caught the finest. A handful or two of wet sea-weed was thrown into each

basket, and the gentlemen prepared to start again. The Baron was first and walked off ; the Marquis stopped for a moment to pick up the soles that were too small for use to throw them into the sea again.

“ My friend is a little vexed,” he said, “ because I cannot convince him that ten yards will fish more ground than eight feet ; but though he is an obstinate droll, he fishes well, so we won’t tease him.”

While the nets were being emptied all eyes had been fixed on them, and Hope had not thought of the tide, but now that the Marquis turned to renew the fishing, he saw with astonishment that it had fallen so rapidly that they were now upwards of three hundred yards from the water, although five minutes before they had stood absolutely in it when the nets were lifted.

“ The tide falls fast here,” said Hope.

“ And it rises faster,” replied the Marquis, “ which we must remember, for when it turns we can fish no more. So adieu for the present.”

The Marquis and his friend walked straight out to sea. Cross and Hope took their way towards one of the masses of rock round which a number of men and boys were busily engaged in digging in the sand.

“ Are those people gathering bait ?” asked Hope.

“ Some of them are,” answered Cross ; “ those, for

instance, whom you see on the dry ridges of sand ; but the greater part of them are seeking sand-eels, or lançons as they are here named ; they are excellent eating, and we will buy some. There are two sorts of lugworm that they find in the sand, one of which is much more prized by the fishermen than the other. The one they value I have not remarked on our coasts, though it may be there ; it is larger than the common lug, and has a large lump in the middle. When they dig them up, the fisherman tears off the tail and squeezes the inside out. The worm then looks like a narrow strip of raw beef ; the fishermen tell me that the brills and bass take this bait, but that only flounders and plaice take the common lugworm. We will look at them and you will see how they find and distinguish the two sorts ; but, first of all, let us watch them catching the sand-eels. I daresay you have often seen them caught on our coast ; there, as you must know, they are taken by drawing a blunt sickle through the sand at the edge of the sea ; here, at night, these girls catch them also much in that way, only they use a two-pronged fork instead of a sickle. In the day-time, however, they catch them by digging circular trenches in the wettest parts of the strand, as you will see.”

“ We have forgotten the crab-hunters,” said Hope.

“ I should like to have seen more of their way of working. I wish to see all the different modes of fishing, and all the varieties of fish they catch.”

“ Well, you have a good deal yet before you, but you need not be afraid of not seeing both the hand-nets and crab-hunters at work ; they will be out here soon, for they are sure to come here as soon as they have searched all the crevices where we left them, and these rocks before us are more productive, as they are farther out to sea, and the crevices are more numerous. If you look behind, you will see the girls are nearly at the end of the rock where we came down to the strand ; when they get there, they will follow in the line we are now going, and you will have plenty of time to see them at work.”

Hope agreed to be guided, and they stepped out towards the diggers. He was surprised, as they walked, to find that the distance was so great ; the people apparently were quite close to them, yet it took several minutes' sharp walking to reach the spot where they were at work, so deceiving was the flat wet surface over which they moved. When they did reach the place, they found a number of people—men, women, and boys—all engaged exactly in the same way. Each held in his hand a spade about six inches wide and ten deep, with a long straight handle ; the blade of the spade was a

good deal bent, so as to prevent the sand from slipping off. The two friends stationed themselves beside an old woman with a good-natured face. She wore very short petticoats, and shewed a pair of uncommonly stout legs, and as she dug they soon saw that she had arms to match. The sand, where they joined her, was very wet, and small streams filtered from the rock, making some places more soft than others. These were the spots which were especially selected, and the mode of operating was by beginning on the side nearest the sea, and throwing out a narrow trench, two or three spadesful wide, forming a ring about six feet in diameter ; this she did with great rapidity, and every now and then a little bright speck would be seen in the sand she threw out, upon which she pounced like lightning, and then flung the little silver wriggling thing into the basket, which for this sport was not worn on the shoulder, but was generally placed in the middle of the circle being made. When one circle was completed another was commenced immediately before it ; when that was finished like the first, a third was begun, and ended exactly in the same way. The old lady then went back to the place she had begun upon, and turned over the whole of the sand which had remained undisturbed in the centre of the rings, and she took a considerable

quantity. She worked with great speed, and was certainly in capital condition, for she neither drew a long breath, nor seemed the least heated by the exertion.

Hope asked her why she dug the rings, and then came back again.

"My good gentleman," she said, "the lançons are sometimes deep, and then we don't get them, but when we make this ring it fills with water, and they come nearer the surface ; so when we dig again we turn them out and fill our baskets. Will you buy mine ? you shall have them cheap."

"How much," said Cross, "do you ask ?"

"Whatever the good gentleman pleases," she replied.

"Oh, nonsense, Marie," said Cross ; "any price is no price ; tell us what you expect, and perhaps we shall buy."

The old woman looked at Cross ; she seemed to think he was an old hand, so after a pause she said, "Will the gentleman give me a sou the dozen ?"

"That is more than they are worth, you know, Marie, but if you keep them for us, we will give you a sou the dozen for all you catch to-day."

"I will keep them," said the old lady, "and thank you."

"Shall we go and watch them dig for lugworms ?"

said Cross ; “ we shall just have time to see them and then return to meet the crab-hunters, who, you may observe, are now coming here, as I said they would.”

“ Allons ! marche ! ” said Hope ; “ but tell me, do you know that old lady with the stout legs ? for you called her Marie.”

“ Not I,” replied Cross ; “ but nine-tenths of these old bodies are called Marie, and are dedicated to the Virgin. The others have very fine names, such as Euphrosyne, Angela, or Seraphine. I made a dash at Marie, and was right.”

“ Poor old Marie ! I think you drove a hard bargain with her. A sou a dozen is surely not much, especially as you tell me that fish is dear here.”

“ She is very well off at a sou the dozen ; it is double the price she would get from any one else, for, though it is true that any large fish is sold very dear in comparison with other things in the country, yet small fish are cheap ; you may get half a basketful of sardines for five sous, and they will ask you five francs for a bass of six or seven pounds weight. It is a curious thing for a people that understand good eating, but they seem to prefer a coarse fish, if he be large, to those delicate little things. I believe the cooks are such lazy brutes that they don’t like the trouble of cleaning such small things,

and so spoil them in dressing, to disgust their masters. The girls with the hand-nets will very likely get some of these sardines, and if they do, we will take them home, and you shall say if they are not equal to, if not better, than whitebait."

"I never tasted a bass," said Hope ; "is it a good fish ?"

"Yes," replied Cross, "it is at least not a bad fish, and if you are anxious to taste one, we may easily gratify you. The tide is now very nearly low enough for the people to examine their nets and lines, and they are pretty sure to have some bass or bar as they call them, and you may get a tolerably good one for a franc and a half, or two francs ; but here we are on the dry sand. Now, look ; that boy is digging for the common lug ; you see he is digging straight on in a place where the casts are numerous. We need not look at him, but here comes this old fellow, who, you see, is only digging every here and there. He is looking for the sort of lug I described to you. If you remark there are hardly any castings where we now are, and the holes are in pairs, from one to two feet apart ; these are made by the worm which they prize ; each worm has two holes, and it seems as if they enter by one and go out by the other, for they are always found between these two holes.

There appear to be a good many here, so I will hail the old fellow and you shall see."

Cross called to the old man—"There are a number here." The old man came towards them. "Thank you, sir," he said, "this looks well." He immediately stuck his spade into a hole, and a small quantity of sand and water was raised in another hole about two feet distant. "There is one here!" he exclaimed, and began to dig in the line between the two, opening deeper as he got towards the centre ; when there, he dabbed down his hand and drew forth an ugly-looking animal, about ten inches long, the half of which was of a dark muddy red, and twice the thickness of the other, which was of a dirty yellow colour. They had not long to examine it, for in an instant the old fellow tore off the yellow part, squeezed a quantity of nasty looking stuff out of the big end, threw it into his basket, and then began at another hole with the same result.

"What are you going to do with these?" asked Hope.

"We are going to bait our lines ; and it is nearly time to start, for here comes my wife and son, and if we do not look sharp some one may take our fish."

"Have you any lines set just now?" asked Hope.

"Yes, and nets too, and we are going to set more.

You see my wife and son with their burden ; they have my best tree-mell and some lines. My little boy and myself have fresh bait to put on the hooks that we set yesterday, for to-morrow is the great marée."

"His best tree-mell ! what does he mean ?" asked Hope.

"Surely you must know," answered Cross, "the tree-mell is our trammell, or flue net ; we must have learnt this mode of net-making from the French, for trammell is evidently the *trois-maill*es, or three meshes, which exactly describes the net."

"You are right," said Hope, "the large meshes in the strong nets, which form the two walls, with the fine net of small meshes which hangs between them, are certainly three meshes. Live and learn ; and to-day I have had a lesson, for I now know that the English trammell is the Norman tree-mell. But how do they set their nets and lines, for I see no boat ?"

"They don't require a boat, and, indeed, I don't believe there is such a thing on any part of the coast between Granville and Pontorson, for I never saw one. The fishermen choose a place on the sand, generally where the castings of the lugworms are most numerous, or where the ground is marked by the water-runs, and there they spread their nets or set their lines ; this

they do when the tide is at the lowest, and there they leave them till the tide goes out again. They then go to them, unhook any fish that have taken the bait, rebait the lines, and again leave them. The nets are set in the same way, similarly left and examined. They have three days once a fortnight that the ebb is very great, and during these three days these people work very hard ; for they come along these dreary sands and examine their nets and lines both now and during the night tide, when they have to rebait their lines, pick and clear the nets from weeds and dirt, and smooth them out if they are at all entangled ; and all this in a very short space of time, for they dare not remain on the shore when the tide turns, especially at night, for often the wave comes—that is to say the tide—in with such a sudden rush that if it were to overtake them, they must inevitably be drowned. When you talk of a boat you forget the great rise and fall of the tide here ; and I must remind you that the nets which these people set now on the dry sand will have seven fathom of water over them when the tide is full.”

“That is true,” said Hope ; “I had forgotten the greatness of the tides. I should like to go out and see what these people have caught.”

“We had better put that off till to-morrow,” said

Cross, "as you wish to see the crab-catching. The highest tide is to-morrow, and the nets catch most at these tides, for the fish are most on the move then ; whereas the first day of the high tides is always best for crabs, as they do not move about so fast. The girls do not seek them much during the neap tides, so that they have ten or twelve days to accumulate in the holes. My advice, therefore, is that we see what the girls are about to-day, and to-morrow we can observe the nets and lines."

"So be it," said Hope ; "but just let me have one look at the net before we start, for the old woman and the man are quite close to us."

This was true : a tall elderly woman, shewing the remains of great beauty, and wearing the picturesque Granville cap, was within a few yards of them ; she was carrying one end of a long hand-barrow, on which a quantity of net was piled so high that it completely hid a fine handsome lad who was bearing the other end. When they came up to the old man they put the barrow down on the sand and began to rub their hands.

"That must be heavy," said Hope, addressing the woman, who had bowed very gracefully to the two strangers.

"Oh no, gentlemen," she replied, "it is not heavy

now, for it is dry, and we have always hope that it is to bring us something to buy bread, which makes it feel light ; but when the grand maree is over, and we have to take it to the shore, if we are disappointed in our hopes and catch little, then, indeed, we remember that it is wet and heavy, for our hearts are heavy too, and we know that we are poor, and shall be ill off till the next grand maréc."

"Had you any luck with the morning tide?" asked Cross.

"Yes, sir, we did very well, and I sold them all, except one nice bar and a brill which the boy has in his basket ; as we did so well, I can sell them very cheap."

"Let us see them," said Cross ; then speaking in English to Hope :—

"You wished to taste a bar, we may as well let this old lady cheat us as anybody else."

The young man took the basket from his shoulder ; it was much larger than those usually carried, and was quite full of little bundles of straw ; each bundle was about four inches long, and two in diameter ; they were twisted very neatly round with a single straw, so that they were quite hard and firm ; there were at least a hundred of them in the basket. The young man emptied

them out on the sand, and below lay a bass about four pounds weight, and a very fine brill.

"There, gentlemen!" said the woman, "I can let you have these beautiful fish for five francs—you will not often get such a bargain."

"Bargain do you call it?" said Cross; "where did you leave your conscience, madam? do you think it rains francs, that we can give you five francs for two wretched things like those?"

"Wretched do you call them?" answered the lady, raising her voice; and sticking her finger into the gills of the fish she plunged them into the water that had filtered into one of the holes her husband had dug in seeking for worms. "Look at them! and if you have any sense you must allow that you never saw better."

"Then since they are so beautiful, you had better keep them," said Cross; "let us go."

"Ah, sir," said the woman, lowering her voice; "look at them again, you will see you are mistaken; the fish are beautiful, and if you look you will make me an offer."

"Well," said Cross, "as it is the first day of the tide I will be generous; I will give you three francs for the fish, provided you send them to Carolles for me."

"Give them to the gentleman," interposed the old

man, "and let us go ; we shall have some one robbing our nets."

"Who allowed you to speak?" said the woman to her husband, and putting her arms a-kimbo ; "if you are to interfere you may sell the fish yourself, for I shall go home."

The husband looked penitent and said not another word.

"Make it three and a half," said the woman, turning again to Cross, "and you shall have them."

"Not a liard beyond three francs," said Cross, and began to walk away.

"Stop! stop!" said the woman, "here comes the little boy ; give him five sous for carrying them and you shall have them."

Cross turned and produced his purse ; he counted out the three francs and gave them to the old lady, who immediately tied them in the corner of the handkerchief which she wore round her neck.

"I have given away the fish," she said, smiling ; "but you will give me a better price another time."

"Yes, a fairer," returned Cross ; "for I cannot afford to give such extravagant prices every day."

The woman laughed and shook her fist at Cross. "Here," she said to a boy who ran up, "take these fish

to Carolles; the gentlemen will tell you where, and he will give you five sous. Take care that you shew them to me when I come home; no cider, remember, unless these good gentlemen give you a cup for being quick."

The boy, who seemed in great spirits, nodded and answered, "Yes, mother; and see here," he continued, holding up a basket, "see what 'Phrosyne has given me—is she not good? there is enough for to-day and to-morrow."

The woman looked in the basket and then clapped her hands. "She is indeed good," she said; "this is a lucky day."

Hope looked in the basket also; he saw a large mass of dirty, black-looking jelly lying at the bottom of the basket, and two or three dozen of very small sand-eels.

"What nasty-looking stuff is that they are clapping their hands about?" he asked.

Cross looked also; "It is a lot of small cuttle-fish," he said; "they make the best bait in the world for catching other fish; one of the girls with the hand-nets has caught them, I suppose, and has given them to the boy. Will you shew the sepias to this gentleman?" The boy put down his hand and raised it half full of the

black stuff; this he took to the hole full of water, where he rubbed and squeezed it for a few seconds. When Hope looked again he saw that the boy was holding up six or seven transparent-looking fish about as long as his finger; the body of the fish was like an elongated transparent bag, the eyes were very large, and in front of them protruded a bunch of feelers from half an inch to an inch long, which were also semi-transparent. When the boy dipped them again into the water, Hope saw that they had a sort of silvery lustre that shone very brightly. He at once recognised them as the same fish which he had seen in such quantities at Naples, and which are so much valued on our own coast as bait for cod-fishing. He had never before seen them so small, and he took one into his hand to examine it; he could not feel the bone which he had always seen in the large ones.

“Good-day, gentlemen,” said the woman; “we are fortunate to get them, for if any fish come in, we are sure to have good luck to-night.” She stooped to lift the end of her barrow, and the young man, who had replaced the little bundles of straw in his basket, lifted the other; while the boy emptied the much-prized bait into the old man’s basket, who marched away with his wife and eldest son, leaving the little boy to wash his basket and

the fish, and to carry them where he might be directed. These directions Cross gave him, and then led the way towards the rocks.

“What a handsome old woman that was,” said Hope, “and what a soft voice she had, even when she was scolding you and her husband. All her motions were very graceful, but her voice struck me as so very different from the harsh utterance of the generality of the peasant women I have heard speaking in this country.”

“I believe,” said Cross, “that her voice was peculiarly musical, but I do not know if it would have struck you forcibly anywhere else. It was the contrast that made it so evident, after listening, as you have lately, to the harsh strained voices of the Norman peasant women. This old lady is evidently a Granville woman, and her graceful carriage, handsome face, and black eyes, mark her Spanish origin, or, if not Spanish, at all events shew that they come from some other blood than the very ordinary-looking people that live around them; they never steal, these Granvillites, and are so far honest; but they are such rogues in making a bargain, that I believe, if they are not Spanish, they must be one of the lost tribes of Israel.”

“Talking of bargains,” said Hope, “I felt half

ashamed when you were having such a wrangle with the poor woman, and abusing her fish so shamefully. Half a crown for such fine fish was surely not much."

"I agree with you," said Cross, "they were not dear, as fish sell here; yet, still I gave more than I might have got them for. A Granville woman always asks more than twice what she will take; and as for wrangling, my dear fellow, I always like to be respected by the people of the country where I may chance to live. If I had been weak enough to give that worthy lady the five francs she asked, she would have pocketed my money, and held me in utter contempt; as it is, she has gone away with a sort of respect for me, and had I beat her down to two francs, instead of three, she would have made me a curtsy whenever she saw me."

Hope laughed. "What a snap she gave her husband for telling her to give us the fish! she seems to have broken him in pretty well."

"Not more than other Granville women do; they all keep their husbands in tremendous order; they say, and, from what I have seen, I believe it is true, that no Granville man dare call his soul his own in his wife's presence."

"The same thing is said of most fishing villages," said Hope, "for the wife holds the purse, and therefore

thinks herself authorised to keep her husband, as well as the house, in order."

"Yes, but," said Cross, "in Granville this authority is not confined to the fishermen; it is a place of considerable commerce, and the shopkeepers' wives keep as tight a sovereignty as the fishwomen. All the porters there are of the fair sex, and if a man were to offer to carry your trunk, these gentle creatures would throw him over the quay."

"After such a description," said Hope, "in spite of their beauty, I should' rather prefer choosing a wife elsewhere. But, by the bye, I forgot to ask you what is the use of these little bundles of straw that the son had in his basket?"

"Those are the sinks," answered Cross, "with which the lines and nets are kept in their places."

"Sinks?" said Hope, "straw for sinks! that is something new."

"I was wrong to call them sinks," said Cross, "for in fact they are a sort of anchors. There are string loops fixed at every yard along the bottom of the nets, and at every two or three fathom of the lines; into each of these loops one of those straw bundles is fixed; a hole is then made in the sand, six inches deep; the straw is pushed into the hole, and with a tramp of the heel, the

straw is covered, by which arrangement both nets and lines, are so firmly fixed in their place, that neither fish nor sea can move them."

"It is a capital plan," said Hope, "but can only be of use on a coast like this, where the rise and fall of the tide is so great."

"I am not so sure of that," said Cross ; "there are a great many places on the coast of Britain, where the sea goes out a long way, and where, I am sure, the same thing might be done with advantage, especially at the mouths of small rivers, where salmon and sea-trout frequent. You may make the net take any shape you like with these straw anchors, which is not easily done with leads or stones. When we go to see how they are set to-morrow, you had better look carefully at the way it is done, and we must also see the fisheries which are made with stones, and which are the most productive mode of fishing on the coast. But here we are at the rocks ; and all the girls seem so busy, I suspect they must have good success, so you will see them in all their glory."

CHAPTER V.

AN ESCAPE.

THE rocks up which they now scrambled rose like an island in the plain of sand, and resembled the mass over which they had already passed. The general surface, however, seemed flatter as they first looked over it ; but as they advanced, Hope saw that the crevices were more numerous and longer. The rocks were also more covered with marine plants ; but, wherever they were bare, they shewed the same sort of spongy-looking texture which had attracted his attention at the promontory. Here and there a point rose higher than the general surface, and these points, when examined, proved to be masses of bastard clay-slate. One point especially rose considerably higher than any of the rest, and looked of a lighter colour than the surrounding mass.

The girls were scattered about, two of them generally wading together in the same hole, one moving rapidly, drawing her little hand-net first on one side and then on the other ; while the second was proceeding more

slowly, carefully lifting up the sea-weed and searching under every stone and in every hole with her iron hook. When the two friends reached the first pair, Hope recognised in one of them the same little girl who had fallen into the water when they had first seen them.

“I am glad you are come,” she said, “for you will buy my crabs ; and I have got some very fine ones. Shall I shew them to you ?”

“Let me see them,” said Hope.

The little girl stepped out of the water, took off her basket, which seemed very heavy, and placed it on the rock beside the two friends.

“I only said, perhaps I would buy them,” said Hope.

“Ah, but the other gentleman looked as if he would,” said the little girl ; “and when you see them you cannot help wanting them, they are so good.” As she spoke she sat down and spread out her petticoat, into which she dropped six or eight crabs which she picked out of the basket. Almost the whole of these were the spider crabs, with one or two of the common crab among them ; the largest was about twice the size of a man’s fist.

“Let me look at one of these brutes,” said Hope ; “they are very ugly.”

"Yes, but they are very good," said the little girl ; "just feel how heavy this one is," and she handed up one of the largest of the spider crabs.

Hope looked at it. A common crab is no beauty, but the one he held in his hand was a hideous animal ; the body was very much thicker than the common crab ; the claws were very small, and the legs were covered with a sort of spines and a quantity of small marine plants. The back shell was also covered with the same sort of plants, some of which were two inches long. Hope put it down in a small water-hole, where it lay tolerably still, and then looked like a stone or a bit of the surrounding rock covered with sea-weed, for the weed floated away from it when it was in the water, and no unaccustomed eye could have guessed that it was a living creature.

"They must have precious sharp eyes to distinguish that animal in these deep holes," said Hope, "or, when seen, to know that it is a crab, and not a bit of the rock."

"They have uncommonly sharp eyes," answered Cross, "but they do not trust altogether to their eyes. If you take the hook from the girl and touch that fellow under the belly, you will see that he will resent your interference, and grasp the weapon, holding it so tight that you

may lift him out of the water. That is the way in which they are taken, for in general they are lying in holes where even our friend's pretty black eyes would never see them. A poke with the iron rod, however, finds them out, and their irritability of temper proves their destruction ; for they grasp the iron and hold on till they are removed by the fisher, and sent to recover themselves, or fight it out with a dozen or two of companions in a basket."

Hope took the hook from the little girl and tried the process. He put the hook under the crab, which immediately seized it ; he then raised and held it out to the little girl, who looked up as she stretched out her hand to seize the animal by the back.

"She certainly has very pretty eyes," said Hope, "and they look soft and gentle though they are so dark."

"She is no doubt a Granvillaise," said Cross ; "and soft as her eyes may look, I will warrant, when she is old enough to be married, that she will keep her husband in as tight order as the handsome old dragon we met just now."

"Well, she does not seem as if she would," said Hope, "and she looks and moves so gracefully, I could hardly believe she had spent her young life in picking cockles, or hauling up crabs with an iron rod. But

though she is so pretty and graceful, I am sure her game does not resemble her, for I cannot conceive anything more ugly or ungraceful than a spider crab: are they good to eat? I should doubt it, for my part, and think he must have been a brave man, or dreadfully hungry, who was induced to eat the first."

"I have heard your last remark made," said Cross, "about oysters, lobsters, and many other good things. Ugly as these creatures are, they are very good to eat. The people of the country prefer them to the common sort. You must have eaten partan pie in Scotland, and the Scotch must have learnt that dish from their allies the French, for that is one of the ways of dressing them here. Another is to mix the meat after it is boiled with fine herbs, oil, and vinegar, and serve it cold in the shell. You shall try both these ways if you choose to buy this girl's basket, and while you are making your bargain I will go and see what the other girl is doing up in the corner of that crevice. I suspect she has got a shoal of what they call sardines, and if so, I will get some to let you taste them."

"Cross walked away, and Hope made the little girl empty out her basket; she had about sixty crabs of both sorts, and all sizes. Hope selected two dozen of the finest, and asked the price.

The little girl looked at him with soft pleading eyes, and answered, "They are very fine, the gentleman will give me two francs."

"Two francs," said Hope to himself, "two francs are equal to twenty pence—twenty pence for twenty-four crabs! less than a penny apiece; that surely is not dear, and Cross cannot laugh at me, so I will give it;" then addressing the girl he said, "if I give you two francs you will take them to Carolles for me."

"Oh yes," replied the girl, her eyes sparkling and a smile playing round her mouth, "give me the two francs and I will take them home for you."

"But if I give you the money now, perhaps you will not take them," said Hope, thinking himself very sharp.

"Oh," said the girl, "who would ever suspect me of being so dishonest? If you do not like to trust me, I will wait till you come to the house, and you can see them before you pay me."

"No, no," said Hope, "I will trust you; there is the money, and you may take the crabs home when you like; for if you are a rogue your face belies you."

"I will take them directly," said the girl, "and thank you; but see, the other gentleman is beckoning to you."

Hope looked and saw Cross waving to him: so he walked towards him, leaving the little girl to replace her

crabs in the basket. Hope felt rather proud of his bargain, and thought to himself that Cross had been unjust towards the Granvillaise—if the little girl was one—for she had asked a very moderate price for her wares, and had agreed to carry them home into the bargain, and that without the slightest wrangle. When he got near Cross, he asked what he had got to show.

“There are a great lot of these cuttles here,” answered Cross, “and it may interest you to see them make use of the provision which nature has given them for their defence. I have sent the girl to drive them up to this end, and when she begins to use her net, you will see how, in a moment, they will make the water as black as ink, by ejecting the sepia from their ink-bags: they move very slowly in the water, and every fish, even the very prawns, attack them: this power of hiding themselves by darkening the water seems their only protection against so many enemies, and they are richly gifted with this weapon of defence. You will see after they are taken and well washed that they are quite empty and transparent—yet if you put them back and leave them undisturbed in the sea for ten minutes, you will find that they are again charged, as full as ever, with this black fluid. I have thought when I saw the experiment tried, that it might be a source of great profit to a paint-maker,

if he could discover the chemical compound of a fish's stomach, that can so rapidly convert sea water into this pitchy ink."

The girl was walking very slowly towards them, holding her net in both her hands, and striking it gently on the top of the water.

"Here they are," said Cross ; "do you see them ?"

Hope looked. He observed a number of shining objects moving in the water with a sort of little jerk. He told the girl to stand still, and then he saw indistinctly the shape of the cuttle-fish ; when the girl advanced, he again saw them move with a jerk, but he could not distinguish whether they moved with their head or tail foremost: he thought it was the latter, but he found it impossible to say which ; for when they moved they threw out a small jet of the black liquid, that darkened the water so much, they were quite obscured.

The girl now came forward and made two rapid sweeps of the narrow corner with her net: after each sweep she emptied her net on the bank, and lifted each time two or three large handfuls of the nasty jelly-looking stuff, which they had before seen in the boy's basket. The water was as black as ink.

"They will not move now," said the girl ; "and I shall get them all." She then again swept her net

several times deeper and slower through the water, emptying a good quantity at each sweep on to the first heap ; at last the net came up empty.

“ I think we have them all now. Would you like me to wash them ? ”

“ Do, if you please,” said Cross, “ and then we can count them. As they have got no sardines to-day, I will try to buy them, for I can tell you they are very good, and the Christians here like to eat them quite as well as the fish do. This girl tells me she never before saw so many taken in one day as they have caught now ; the fishermen prize them so highly for bait, that it is not always fair to buy them for eating ; but to-day we shall not injure the fishermen, as they have more than will bait all their hooks ten times over ; and strange to say, they never think of salting them. I am quite sure, if they did salt them, that they would be quite as good for bait, after a night’s soaking, as the fresh ones ; but this they never do, whether from carelessness or the high price of salt, I cannot say.”

“ Are they really such good bait ? ” asked Hope ; “ or is it only fancy in the fishermen ? ”

“ No, no ; there is no fancy in it, they seem to attract beyond any other bait. There are holes in these rocks where small lobsters hide, and perhaps there may

be one now. I will make the girl try, if she has brought her sniggle with her, and you will see him come out and follow one of these cuttles into the net."

Cross bought the whole lot for ten sous, and offered the girl ten sous more if she would try to catch a lobster, for he saw that she had a sniggle stick stuck into the string of her petticoat. In England, when boys go snigglng eels, they take a straight switch with a sharp point, on to which the end of a lob worm is stuck, and instead of a hook they put on a worsted needle firmly fastened in the centre ; but on the coast of Normandy they use a long narrow hook, the shank of which, when baited, they stick into a hole on the point of a stiffer stick than that used with us. To prevent the line from catching they also bore a hole through this stick about two inches from the point ; through this hole the line is drawn and held tight in the hand while they are fishing, which is a much better arrangement than ours, for the line is never entangled in the weeds, roots, or rocks, and when you do hook a fish you have far more power to draw him from his haunt.

The girl at once agreed to try all the lobster holes she knew, and immediately produced her line and stick ; she took the largest and brightest cuttle-fish she could find and baited her hook.

You must carry these sepias for us," said Cross.

"They will blacken my bouquets," said the girl; "but never mind, I can wash them again, and I will put some weed to keep them separate."

"They can blacken nothing now," said Hope; "they are as bright as silver, and seem all dead."

"No, no, they are not dead," answered Cross, "they are not so easily killed; and, dead or alive, they will not be ten minutes in that basket till they are as black as ever; but after the next washing, I hope they may keep bright, and we will taste them, for when well fried they are excellent, and they resemble in taste, but are better than, the most delicate tendons de veau; by the bye, did you buy any crabs, and what did you pay for them?"

"Oh yes," said Hope; "I bought two dozen, and very reasonable I found the little girl; she asked two francs, and I gave them at once."

Cross burst out laughing. "Well done, little Granvil-laise!" he exclaimed.

"What are you laughing at?" asked Hope, rather piqued.

"Why, to be honest," said Cross, "at the way that little monkey has done you; and I will be bound she enjoyed the joke and has laughed much more heartily

than I have ; she would gladly have sold you all she had in the basket for one franc, and you have given her two for the half of it."

"Never mind," said Hope ; "she is welcome to the extra franc and the half of the fish, for I doubt, with all the other things we have got, if we shall be able to eat even a quarter of the two dozen crabs she has taken home."

"You are right," said Cross ; "too much crab is heavy food, so we shall scarcely get through your two dozen, and you must forgive my laughing, only remember that you must not trust pretty pleading eyes in the head of a Granvillaise, be she woman or be she child, unless you are prepared to pay for looking at her eyes, instead of for the fish she has to sell you. But come along, the girl is on before us."

They found the girl at the end of one of the deepest crevices ; her arm was plunged up to the shoulder in the water, and when they looked down they could see that she was poking the end of her stick into a narrow split in the rock.

"There is something here," she said ; "I think it is a lobster ; but he is shy, and I have not seen him yet, and he does not pull hard." She drew the stick gently back, and they saw something follow the bait.

"What was that?" asked Hope.

"Only prawns," said the girl, "but they are very large, so we will have them;" she plunged the other arm into the water and held the net close to the bottom; she then again pushed the bait into the hole and drew it out very slowly.

Hope could now see four very large prawns following the cuttle and giving it a strong jerk by seizing hold of the feelers; the girl continued to draw back the bait till it was over the net, which she suddenly raised, and the whole four were safe in the bag. "There," she said, "they are worth the trouble, for they are enormous."

And so they were, for Cross declared they were the largest he had ever seen. Though he knew that the largest were generally found thus hid, like lobsters, in the deep narrow cracks of the rocks, still he had never seen any so large as the four just taken.

"I had no notion that a prawn would take a bait in that way," said Hope.

"It is only on a coast like this that you can see it done," said Cross, "but you must be aware that they take bait, if you only remember that along the south coast of England the fine prawns are not caught with nets, as they are here, but with flat baskets, which are baited with fish heads, and set like lobster-pots."

"True, true," said Hope ; "but never having seen them following a bait before, I had forgotten that they must eat as well as everything else. Are there any more holes," he said, addressing the girl, "where you expect to find a lobster?"

"Oh yes," she replied, "plenty ; but lobsters are scarce at this season ; we find a great many more in the spring."

At the next hole which they tried the bait was pulled from the stick and drawn back into the hole with great force.

"It is an eel," she said, "and I have him." She held the line tight in one hand and the stick in the other, and pulled steadily, and with considerable force, for a second or two ; all at once both hands were raised, and an eel of considerable size was wriggling in the air at the end of the stick.

The girl wrapped the line quickly round the stick, pulled out a coarse knife, cut out the hook, and popped the eel into her basket, all in ten seconds. It was then that Hope saw the merit of passing the line through the hole in the end of the stick, for, by drawing the line tight, the eel had no power of moving or entangling the line by twisting himself round it.

"A French sniggle is certainly the best," said Hope ;

“and if I were young enough to go back to Eton, or to care for sniggling eels, I should certainly follow the French plan.”

The two friends followed the girl, while she tried several other holes. A second eel was taken, and a few more large prawns. At the last place which the girl declared to be likely for a lobster they did get one. It was very small, and was caught exactly in the same way as she had taken the prawns. The bait was drawn slowly back, till the lobster came above the net; which was then quickly raised, and the lobster was flapping his tail in the bottom of it. This Cross bought, and, together with the large prawns and cuttles, it was put into the basket of the old lady with the stout legs, who had been employed to dig sand-eels. She was then approaching, after just finishing her day's work, having tried the wet places along the whole length of the rocks, and with great apparent success, for her basket was one-third full.

“How many have you?” said Cross, when he saw her.

“Without counting, give me two francs,” said she, “and I will take them home.”

Cross looked at the basket. “At a sou a dozen; you are not unreasonable. I did not calculate, however, on getting so many, or on paying two francs for sand-eels; but, as I made the bargain, I must take them. We can

give away what we do not want, and they are capital for breakfast." It was therefore agreed that she should take them, with the lobster, cuttle-fish, etc., to Carolles. All these, as we have already said, were put into her basket, and away she marched, looking highly pleased with her day's work. The cuttles, as Cross had foretold, were as black as ever, and underwent another washing and squeezing before they joined company with the brilliant little sand-eels.

The spot where this transaction took place was the outer end of the mass of rock. The hand-nets and crab-hooks were still busily employed behind them ; immediately below, several little children were engaged knocking something off the rock ; a number more were seen scattered over the expanse of sands that stretched between the two friends and the sea ; in the water marched troops of prawn-fishers ; and still further out they saw the heads and shoulders of the oyster-catchers ; while here and there on the sand a man or a woman could be seen with a dog following. These dogs did not attract Hope's notice at the time, and Cross made no allusion to them.

"What are those little things picking off the rocks?" asked Hope. "Are they periwinkles?"

"No," answered Cross, "it is not periwinkles they are

gathering, but limpets. When I told you all these little things were going after cockles, I was wrong ; I forgot the limpets. The people here never use periwinkles, but the poor people consider limpets to be very nutritious food. They stew them with some butter or grease, and put them into their soup. Taste differs in different countries ; for with us, limpets are only used for bait, and the people eat periwinkles. Here, periwinkles are never looked at, and limpets are prized as good food for man. I rather suspect the French are right, and that, if our people were better cooks, they would find that limpets do not deserve to be despised by our poor. Our friend the Marquis is a great gourmand, and a capital cook. If you remind me, we will consult him on this head, as his opinion may be relied on ; and we need not wait long to ask the question, since, if I am not mistaken, I see him coming with his friend, for I see two people carrying a double-handed net between them."

"Till they reach us," said Hope, "let us look at the limpets these brats are gathering ; they may be of a different sort from ours and thus be better eating."

"I think they are exactly the same," said Cross ; "but, as you look more minutely at these things than I do, you may perhaps see some difference that has not struck me."

They went towards the children, each of whom had a square-pointed knife with a thick back ; some had, in addition, small wooden hammers, others only a stone in their right hands. The edge of the knife was applied always on one side and never on the top of the shell ; a little sharp tap was given, either with the hammer or the stone, and the fish fell at once. Hope examined the contents of one of the baskets ; the greater part of the limpets were exactly like those on the British coast, but some had much smoother shells, which were marked with bright coloured rings, some purple, some red, some yellow ; all the children, however, agreed in affirming that those smart fish were exactly the same in quality as their sombre brethren, and that all were excellent in soup.

While they were talking and examining the basket, the Marquis and his friend had been approaching them ; he hailed them when about fifty yards off, asking how they got on and whether they were amused. The two friends then advanced towards him, asking what sport he had had.

“ Capital,” said the Marquis ; “ I shall be ruined in buying baskets to send them to my friends, for when we have chosen the best for ourselves, I have enough for twenty others.”

Cross whispered to his companion, "We shall share the best, as he never neglects number one." The two friends then examined the basket, which contained a prodigious quantity.

Both offered their congratulations on his good sport.

"It is wonderful," said the Marquis, "and I almost wish it was not so good, for my back will be broken before I get home, and I am rather anxious to be there; for, since I am to have the honour of dining with you, I should not like that our landlord gave you a bad dinner, so I shall give him a little advice myself. I like to keep my hand in practice in that fine art, for if things grow much worse here I have some thoughts of offering myself to some of your grand seigneurs, who, I hear, pay for a good cook at a rate not unworthy the notice of a poor French marquis."

Cross laughed at the joke; Hope took what was said for gospel, for he did not know, as Cross did, that the Marquis was a legitimist and as proud of his rank and old blood as any Welshman; indeed, being a Breton, he had Welsh blood in his veins; but the intention of assisting the cook Cross knew was no joke, and he was therefore well aware that they would have as good a dinner as the provisions of the place could afford.

“Mr. Hope and myself,” he said, “feel grateful for the interest you take in our nourishment ; and, since you are going to our quarters, will you allow me to recommend to your notice the fish we have sent home, in hopes that you will give the proper orders to the cook?”

“With the greatest pleasure,” said the Marquis. “Pray, what have you sent?”

Cross enumerated the various sorts, and mentioned that his friend had never tasted cuttle-fish.

“Ah, then, I will see to them myself,” said the Marquis, “and I hope he will not be disappointed ; but with so much before us I will lose no time.”

“Before you go,” said Hope, “will you have the kindness to tell me if limpets are good to eat?”

“For want of better,” said the Marquis, “they allow themselves to be eaten : they are a little hard, and require time and attention ; but with this they are nutritious, and by no means to be despised by a person who is a judge ; and they should suit the English taste, for they are improved by being a little peppery.”

Hope thanked the Marquis, adding that he wished to enlighten his countrymen on some points of good eating, which they had hitherto neglected ; among others limpets and cuttle-fish ; and since he had heard his opinion on limpets, knowing him to be such good authority, he

should take the earliest opportunity of correcting the ignorance which had hitherto been displayed in Britain by overlooking such an article of nutriment.

The Marquis gave a bow and a smile. "If you take the merits of limpets on mere report, I hope to allow you to judge for yourself regarding cuttle, and have no doubt as to the result." He then marched off. The water, while he was standing, had dripped into his sabots, from which it squirted as he walked. With his old ragged straw-hat, sand-besprinkled blue flannel trousers, and wooden sabots, he looked as little like a marquis of ancient lineage as well could be.

"He may be a great man and a good cook," said Hope, "but he looks as little like either as anything I ever saw."

"Wait till you see his dinner and himself to-night, and you will change your opinion," said Cross; "in the meantime, if you wish to try if you can find cockles as well here as in Scotland, we had better be off."

They turned to walk towards the children who were far out on the sand, and as they did so, they saw close to them an old woman, followed by a dog. The old woman carried the usual basket on her left shoulder, and on the other a pickaxe, with a very long handle. The dog was white, with long hair and a bushy tail,

twisted up with a double turn, which he carried on one side of his back ; he had a long, sharp, foxy-looking face, with bright black eyes, and his ears stood very erect, and were pointed.

“Here is something worth your seeing,” said Cross ; I had forgotten this sort of fishing, and as I am sure you will think it more interesting than cockle-picking, we will follow this old lady, and see what ‘sport she gets. I know the dog ; it is one of the best on the coast.”

“The dog !” said Hope. “What has a dog to do with fishing ?”

“Everything,” said Cross, “in this sort of fishing, as you will see if you follow.”

“But tell me,” said Hope, “what are they going to fish for ?”

“Eels,” replied Cross ; “and by the blue colour of the dog’s face, and the weight of the old lady’s basket, they have had very good success already.”

Hope stepped out and overtook the old woman ; he asked permission to see what she had in her basket.

“Willingly, my good gentleman,” said she, and lifting up the sea-ware he saw that the basket was half full of conger-eels, about as long as his arm.

“And does your dog catch those eels ?” asked Hope.

“Oh no, sir ; the dog finds them,” she answered,

"and I catch them. If you like to come on a little there is a very good place near this, and you shall see how it is done."

"By all means let us go," said Hope ; "fishing for eels with a dog and a pickaxe is something new, and quite beyond the common."

The old woman led the way along the outer edge of the rocks, till she came to a place where the sand ran for a considerable distance into the body of the rocks, which rose rather steeply on either side of this sandy estuary. The sand, however, was not smooth, for in all directions little mounds rose up, breaking the level.

"Go and seek, good dog Trompette," said the old lady when she had entered this creek.

The dog started off, hunting in all directions. In a quarter of a minute he stopped at one of the little lumps, and began to scratch and whine like a terrier at a rat-hole.

"See ! he has one," said the woman, as she ran towards the dog, brandishing her pickaxe. When she reached the place, she looked which way the hole ran, and then began tearing up the sand, which rose in lumps at every blow. After eight or ten strokes out tumbled a conger-eel about the same size as those in her basket ; the dog and his mistress made a dash at it ; the biped

got it ; the woman flung it with great force on the hard sand, and then quietly put it in her basket with the rest of her load, shouting, "Seek again, Trompette."

Trompette obeyed, and in this way, within five minutes after entering the creek, the dog found, and the mistress dug up and basketted, three of those eels. After this there was an interlude, the dog still hunting, and the old lady remaining stationary, with Cross and Hope beside her.

"He is a capital dog that of yours, madame ; you call him Trompette, I think?" said Hope.

"Yes, sir ; his father was called Trompette ; and all his puppies were called Trompette after him. The father got the name because his tail was twisted like a trumpet ; and you see my dog's tail twists like one too."

"And are there any young Trompettes?" asked Cross.

"Oh yes ; a great many," replied the woman. "I have got two, and I call them both Trompette."

"Well," said Hope, in English, "if there are different generations of Pepper and Mustard on the borders of Scotland, I see there are Trompettes of all ages on the shores of Normandy. And pray, madame," he continued, addressing the old lady, "have you much difficulty in breaking these dogs to hunt eels?"

"None at all ; we take a young dog out with an old

one once or twice, and we let them worry the eel, or perhaps eat one, and then they will hunt quite well; but some of them have finer noses than others, and of course these are the best."

"And is this talent confined to the famille Trompette, or are there other dogs that do the same?"

"Other dogs are taught," said the old lady, "but my dog's family do it at once."

"And in what sort of ground do you hunt for these eels?"

"In ground like this," she said, lifting up a lump of the sand with her pickaxe.

As she did so, Hope saw that there was something curious in the sand; it was, in fact, exactly like the rocks over which they had been walking, only quite soft.

"Ha," said he, "I must have a look at this. Here, madame, you have shewn me something new to-day, and take this to drink in return for the pleasure you have given me." He gave her a franc, and she, after returning a volume of thanks, began to walk away.

Hope called after her, "Before you go, just knock me off a bit of that rock if you please."

She did as she was asked, and then continued her way, followed by her dog, to renew her search in the next creek in the rocks.

"Well," exclaimed Hope, "this eel-hunting with a dog is the funniest sight I ever saw, and well worth coming all the distance to see ; and now let me have a look at the ground where they find them, for it seems equally curious."

On examination, they perceived that the whole ground was composed of small tubes, laid side by side, exactly like honeycomb ; the tubes seemed to be composed of some glutinous substance, in which shell-sand was sticking.

"I should like to get a sight of the insect that makes these tubes ; it must be something like those which form the coral rocks."

He sought in vain, however, in the mass before him ; the insect was deeper down in the sand, and they had nothing with which to dig deeper.

"Come to the place where the eels were found," said Hope ; "the hole is deeper there, and I have little doubt that the congers are in search of these pipe-makers when they bury themselves in the sand."

They went to the spot where the last eel had been found ; it was close by the place where the old woman had knocked off a good number of bits of the rock ; and here they were more fortunate, for in the very first sandy lump which he broke, Hope saw twenty or thirty long



worm-looking creatures draw themselves back into their holes. The whole lump was soon detached from the rock, and the object of his search was before him.

The creatures were worm-like ; the lower half, or tail, being considerably thinner than the upper half ; this upper half had rings on it, that at first looked like legs ; at the head there was a slight increase of size, and the end, or mouth, was somewhat like a lamprey's ; the colour was a pale yellowish-brown.

"I have seen a good deal that is new to me to-day," said Hope ; "these among the rest. Each of these pipes seems to contain an insect, and if so, what countless myriads must there be on this coast ; and how little would we think, in casting a glance on this vast plain of sand, that it was teeming with life so varied and innumerable ! If I do not mistake, the rocks are living too, for almost all we have passed over to-day look like indurated masses of the same formation as this sand. I will soon see, by looking at what the old lady has knocked off for me, whether I am right in this supposition ; at all events I feel convinced that the conger-eels bury themselves in search of these insects. If I were near the basket again, I would cut one open to examine what it has in its stomach."

The broken rock was quite close ; a few steps

brought them to it, and the first glance proved that Hope was right ; the rock, like the sand, was composed of tubes, lying closely joined together. At one place where the pickaxe had struck, a very large fragment had been broken off ; the softer spongy substance had split and fallen, shewing that it was a superstructure raised on a foundation of clay slate. The mass that had fallen had peeled from this harder rock, and enabled the friends accurately to examine the formation, and they could plainly see that the tubes were continuous for several feet. The surface of the mass exactly resembled a large sponge, swelling into lumps or sinking into hollows ; but on more minute examination, the ends of the tube which in a sponge would be soft, were here formed of small particles of silex and broken shell, stuck together by some glutinous substance.

“It looks,” said Hope, “as if these creatures, on leaving their holes, got covered with this sand, and scraped themselves clean on the edge when they went back.”

“Yes, it does,” replied Cross ; “and with the sand they must leave some of the slime from their bodies, for the edge, which is quite soft, is sticky to the touch.”

“So it is,” said Hope ; “and I suppose it hardens by exposure, and thus forms these rocks ; let us try to

get hold of some of the insects again, and feel if they are sticky or slimy."

A lump of the rock was broken, and like the sand it was found to be swarming with the same insects. Those in the rock, however, were rather darker in colour and smaller than those they had examined on the flat sand ; and they were confirmed in thcir idea, as to the formation of the rock, by finding that a glutinous substance issued from them when they were rubbed between their fingers.

Hope and Cross remained some time quite absorbed in examining the form of the rock and the creatures within it. Hope was in the act of breaking off some small bits to carry home with him, when Cross suddenly gave a loud shout, calling out—"The Lord have mercy on us ! I forgot the tide, and here it comes !"

Hope turned towards the sea and saw a stream of water running at a rapid pace, and covering the sandy creek where the eels had been found. Not aware of the danger, he said quite quietly—"Faith, so it does ; I suppose we had better be off."

"If we can," said Cross ; "by crossing the rock we may yet be in time." He looked rather pale as he spoke, and Hope seeing his alarm hastened to follow him ; for the moment Cross ceased speaking ; he scam-

bled up the rocks, and began walking as rapidly as he could across them towards the nearest shore ; but the pace was necessarily slow, for the roughness in some parts, and the slipperiness in others, obliged them to pick their steps ; the numberless crevices, which had been a source of amusement an hour before, now served still further to retard their progress, for they were forced to make many a detour to get past them. At last they reached the highest point, and could see before them.

“Thank God,” said Cross, “the sand is not yet covered, but we must run for it.”

The sand was in fact still visible, but small lines of blue water could be seen marking and breaking the surface.

They hastened on, Hope looking at these lines, which seemed rapidly to increase in breadth ; but he was soon obliged to keep his eyes on the ground, for in looking up he had placed his foot on a bunch of weed, slipped, fell, and got a severe shake, besides cutting his hands.

In three minutes more, however, they were at the edge of the sand ; but when they reached it, they saw that the sand was now in stripes, the water in sheets.

“We shall do yet,” said Cross, “for, thank God, here is a girl before us.” He began to run rapidly, and Hope followed.

They proceeded thus for about two hundred yards, when they saw the little girl (the same from whom Hope had bought the crabs) coming hastily towards them. She reached them before they had advanced many more paces, and as she ran she called out something which they could not at first understand, for she was so much out of breath.

When she was close to them, they could distinguish that she said, "The wave! the wave! it is coming; turn, turn, and run, or we are lost!"

They did turn, and they saw, far out to sea, a large wave rolling towards the shore. Blown as they were, they yet increased their speed, as they retraced their steps towards the rocks they had just left.

The little girl passed them and led the way; the two friends strained every nerve to keep pace with her, for, as they neared the rock, the wave still rolled towards them; the sand became gradually covered, and the last ten steps were up to their knees in water, but they were on the rock.

"Quick! quick!" said the girl; "there is the passage to cross, and if the second wave comes we shall be too late."

She ran on for a hundred yards till she came to a crack in the rock, six or seven feet wide, along which the water was rushing like a mill sluice.

"We are lost," said the girl; "I cannot cross, it will carry me away."

"Is it deep?" asked Cross.

"Not very," she said, "but it is too strong."

Cross lifted the girl in his arms; he was a strong big man; he plunged into the stream, which was up to his waist. With a few strides he was across, and set the girl down; he then held on by the rock, and stretched out his hand to Hope, who was following like an experienced wader, taking very short steps, and with his legs well stretched out, to prevent being swept away by the force of the water; Hope grasped the hand thus held out to him, and in another second the two friends were standing by the girl.

"That is tremendous," said Hope; "if I had not seen it I never would have believed it."

"It is indeed," said Cross; "and in winter or in blowing weather, the tide wave comes in with far greater force than this we have just seen."

"Come on, come on," cried the girl. "Holy Virgin! we were nearly lost."

The little girl again led the way to the high point of lighter coloured rock which Hope had remarked in the morning. When they had reached it, she said, "We are safe now;" and she pulled from her breast a string of

beads with a crucifix, and began to tell the beads. The two friends looked on in silence ; perhaps they too were returning thanks to heaven, although they held no beads in their hands.

After a few minutes thus spent, the girl looked up and smiled to Cross. "Thank you," said she, "for lifting me over ; I could not have crossed by myself ; and," she continued, "the second wave has come, and it is all water now."

The friends looked ; all around them was the wide sea ; they were on an island which each moment became less ; and this island was three quarters of a mile from the shore.

"I am afraid, sir, you will be cold," said the little girl. "We are quite safe here, for this point is always above water except in a storm ; but we shall have to remain here for three or four hours before we can go to the shore."

"Cold or hot," said Cross, "we may be thankful we are here. But what made you forget the tide, for you must know the coast so well?"

"I did not forget it," she said, "but I feared you would be drowned as you are strangers ; and I thought I should be in time to tell you, but I was too late, and the wave came."

"And did you risk your life to save us?" said Hope, the tears starting into his eyes.

"I thought at any rate I should get here," she replied. "As you are strangers you would not know that it is always dry here, and on the strand you would be lost ; so I came to help you, for the gentleman was kind, and gave me a good price for my crabs ; so I hoped I should be in time to warn you, but I was very nearly too late."

Hope took the little girl in his arms and kissed her. "Never say a word against a Granvillaise again as long as you live," he said to Cross, "for this child shews that they are brave and generous. If they drive a hard bargain you see they are grateful, instead of laughing at their customers ; and for this little creature's sake I shall love and respect them even if they do bully their husbands ;"—then speaking in French to the girl he continued, "We owe you our lives, you brave little creature ; so I thank you in the meantime, and hope to do more hereafter. But how came you to know we were here ?"

"I took your crabs to the inn, and the bourgeois gave me some bread for the rest that I had in my basket. As I came back I met Angela on the hill. She was tired, and she asked me to carry some of her oysters ; and while I was dividing them between her basket and mine I saw you below. I knew it must be you, for only

strangers would stay so long out here at spring tides. I ran away at once, and forgot that I had her oysters, and that the bread for my mother was on the grass. I remembered the oysters when I had run a good way. They are heavy, and I wished I had left them, for I could not run so fast with them on my back."

"She is a brave little thing," said Cross, "and shews she has presence of mind to see, and promptitude to act. She shall have all the money in my pocket."

"And in mine too," said Hope, "but it is not much, and we must do something more for her. I wonder what she would most like in the world."

"Ask her," said Cross.

Hope did so.

"To have a dress," she said, "to wear when I go to mass, just like the one Angela's sister had on last Sunday, with a beautiful silver crucifix like hers."

"You shall have it," said both Hope and Cross together; "but I wish," continued Hope in English, "she had asked something else than dress."

"Though she is a little heroine," said Cross, "still she is French, and therefore a slave to finery; and, heaven knows, she is lightly enough clothed just now to make her covet something better to wear. Poor thing, she must be very cold." He asked her.

"Yes," she replied, "I am a little cold ; for I am hungry."

"And I have left my sandwich box in the carriage," said Hope ; "another proof, if any were wanting, that no one should ever move without the commissariat. Poor little thing, she will have long to wait, and, to say the truth, I feel that a good breakfast will not last all day."

"Have you got your flask ?" asked Cross.

"Yes, by the bye, I have got that," answered Hope ; and he produced it from his pocket.

"We shall do very well then," said Cross, "for I have got half-a-dozen Jersey biscuits, which fortunately are in my breast pockets, and therefore dry ; we shall take the liberty of making free with Miss Angela's oysters, which, with a drop of your brandy to wash them down, will stop a gap till the tide turns. Have you got your knife ?" he asked of the little girl.

"Yes, sir," she said, and held up a coarse square-headed clasp-knife covered with rust ; as well it might be, for it was hanging to her side by a string, and had been trailing for many a day in the sea.

"Count Angela's oysters, then," said Cross, "that we may pay her for them when we get on shore ; for we will eat them, and you shall have a share."

The little thing laughed amazingly, and seemed to think the plan a capital joke ; she emptied the basket on the rock, opened her knife and an oyster in a moment, and handed it to Cross, who in return gave her two biscuits, and the same to Hope.

The girl smiled as she bit one of the good solid captain's biscuits, and then held up another oyster ready opened to Hope.

"Eat that one yourself," he said. "I will take the rest."

She did as she was bid, laughing right merrily as she said—"Poor Angela! she did not think she was giving us our supper, when she asked me to carry her oysters."

Hope then took his share, Cross followed, and the little girl was again desired to take her turn and swallow another of the oysters, which she opened as fast as they could eat. This continued for several rounds, the girl always laughing heartily when she was desired to take her turn, apparently thinking that every fresh oyster was a new and excellent joke.

"Now," said Cross, "a small drop of your bottle, just to keep these fellows warm, and then to work again. Much as I like oysters, I never knew how good they were till to-day."

Hope produced his flask, and offered the little girl the first sip.

She put her lips to the cup and then returned it. "It is too strong," she said; "if it was cider I would have drunk it and been grateful, but for this I must only thank you, for I cannot drink it."

Hope and Cross pressed her in vain even to taste it again, but she refused. As they had no objections to the strength, they practised what they preached, and swallowed a good modicum to their great inward comfort, and then resumed their attack on the biscuits and oysters, never stopping again till all were finished. Another sip from the flask completed the feast.

"There," exclaimed Cross, "there is an end of that; we have passed, in my estimation, a very pleasant ten minutes, but they are the only agreeable ones we shall spend for some time, if they are not the last; the water is narrowing our territory every moment, and if the tide rises much more, we shall have to swim for it yet."

The girl, though he spoke in English, understood by his eye that he was speaking of the tide.

"There is no fear," she said; "for even if the water reaches us, it has no force now, and the points are always dry."

"Cold comfort," said Hope, looking at the small sharp-pointed rocks that rose about a couple of feet above where they were sitting; they were just high enough to

afford a slight shelter from the wind, which they now felt to be cold enough. Their island, however, was still about twenty yards across; the tide was rising more slowly, but it was rising. The food and brandy had warmed the men, but the little girl looked very cold; she was trying to give another turn to a ragged black silk handkerchief which she wore round her neck. The two francs which Hope had paid her, which had excited her gratitude and saved their lives, were tied in one corner; so worn was the handkerchief, however, that the colour of the metal could be seen through the silk.

"Here," said Hope, "put this round your neck;" and he produced from his pocket a gaudy, scarlet, silk pocket-handkerchief, with a black edge.

"Oh no, sir," she said; "it is so handsome, I am afraid it will be spoiled."

"No, it will not," said Cross, "the gentleman gives it to you; so you will take care of it;" then speaking in English, he said to Hope, "as the corner of their handkerchief is always their purse, we may as well club what money we have to furnish the one you have given her; the idea of her riches will do more to warm her than dry clothes and a fire."

"I have not above twenty francs in my pocket," said Hope, "but to those she is heartily welcome."

"And I have not so many," said Cross; "here is all I have, just seventeen francs; but join them with what you have, and tie them whole in the corner of your handkerchief, then put it round her neck, and I will warrant that she will be as warm as a toast, and think herself a second Rothschild."

The money was clubbed—it proved to be forty francs—and was tied as Cross recommended in the corner of her handkerchief. The girl watched the proceeding, and when Hope passed it round her neck, she blushed with delight, kissed both their hands, repeating several times, "How beautiful! how generous, how kind you are to give me so much!" and after looking at her treasures for a while she said, "How jealous Angela will be, and how happy my mother."

"We must not let Angela be jealous," said Cross, "for she is to tell us where her sister got her smart dress; this gentleman and I have promised that you shall have one like it; so you must bring Angela to see us to-morrow, that we may give her a handkerchief also in payment for the oysters, and then she will help us to get the dress we have promised."

"Oh happy day! happy day!" she said, clapping her hands; "Angela will be so pleased."

"If we ever get ashore," said Hope, for a wave at

that moment rolled past, and the water began to run along the little platform they were sitting upon ; they all rose and mounted on the rocky points, where they clustered, supporting each other. Another wave came, it appeared only like a ripple, but when they looked down the water was a foot deep where they had previously been seated. There was silence for a while ; another wave came—the water was within six inches of their feet.

“It is a terrible high tide,” said the girl, “but if we hold together, we shall not be washed away.”

“That is true,” said Cross ; “and as we are wet already we need not much care.”

Hope’s face was towards the shore. “There are a great many people clustering on the point,” he said ; “it is always a comfort to know that our fellow-beings take an interest in us, and I suppose those people are watching us.”

The little girl turned to look ; a faint sound of a cheer was heard, and they could see the people on shore waving their hats and handkerchiefs.

“They think the tide has turned,” she said, “and they are shouting to cheer us.”

She was right ; the tide had turned. Another wave came and wet their feet ; but when it had passed, the water had fallen, and in five minutes more the platform was again dry !

CHAPTER VI.

THE EBB TIDE AND A LATE DINNER.

WHEN the bare surface of the rock was seen, the whole party gladly descended from the point round which they had been clinging so uncomfortably during the last quarter of an hour.

“Grâce à Dieu!” exclaimed the little girl; “I was frightened; were not you?”

“The time seemed very long,” said Cross; “and, to own the truth, I was calculating how long I could have kept my feet on that slippery ledge if the water rose much higher.”

“And I,” said Hope, “am glad to be again standing on this flat surface, wet though it be. We never know the full value of anything till we have lost it; and, as a case in point, I little thought, twenty minutes ago, that I should be glad to be standing here still. And stand we must, for, cold as it is, we should not mend our position by settling down in the puddles which the sea has left.”

The light began to fail, and they kept their eyes

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turned towards the shore. All their hopes were fixed in that direction ; for although the white sails of the fishing boats could be seen to seawards returning to port, they knew that they were hastening to seek the shelter of the mole at Granville, and that there was no chance of any assistance on that side. Five minutes after they had reached the platform, they saw the large group of people disperse from the high point where they had been collected. A few now only remained on this elevated station ; the rest were collected in smaller groups, each group being at some little distance from the other.

“ They are gone to the market now,” said the little girl. “ I am sure they have been thinking of us, for they are very late. Old Marie de Coutance will be very cross, for she is always in such a hurry to be off before it is dark.”

“ What market do you mean ?” asked Hope, “ and who is Marie de Coutance ?”

“ There are people from the different towns who come here to buy what we catch ; three of them are called Marie, and so, to distinguish them, they are called after the town they come from. Marie de Coutance comes from Coutance ; she is always cross, and always in a hurry, for she has a long way to go ; but she gives good prices, so she has many who sell to her. You see she

has plenty near her now, that is her station, the farthest to the left."

"How do you know her station at this distance?" asked Hope.

"Because every one always goes to the same place. The station next to her belongs to Mons. Aufoé. We call him Aufoé de Paris, although he comes from Granville; for he buys all the prawns he can get, and sends them to Paris; and the people like him, as he always gives the same price, and will take all you have without any trouble; so a great many go to him, as you may see, for he has the largest party at his station; and you can see beside him his two horses with the large panniers. Whatever he buys just now will be boiled and sent off to Paris by the diligence to-morrow morning."

"There is a good deal of method in that arrangement," said Cross.

"There is indeed," replied Hope; "and it explains to me what I did not before understand—I mean the way in which all the fish are disposed of; for the quantity must be very great, if the hundreds we have seen fishing to-day only caught a very small portion each. It proves the truth of the assertion, that demand creates supply. If the same organised market could be established in

the west of Ireland, or even in Scotland, there would not be so great a complaint against the indolence of the people as now ; for were there a few Mons. Aufoés de Londres or de Dublin scattered in their fishing-stations, the people would rush to the sea, as they do here, and in time they would learn to extract and spread the riches which now lie untouched and unsought for in her fruitful bosom."

"Why," said Cross, "we have the same sort of people, and on a much larger scale ; what do we call our fish-curers who buy thousands of pounds' worth of herrings every year from our fishermen ?"

"I call them very useful people in their way," said Hope, "and they prove the truth of what I have said ; they buy herrings, and the herring-fishing is fostered, but there are no people to buy and send off to market the shoals of fish which might be caught and sold fresh, for the consumption of our large towns. What employment would be given, what wealth could be gained, by the capture and sale of the myriads of fish which hang on the coasts of Britain, more especially on the west coasts of Ireland and Scotland !"

"I daresay you are right," said Cross, "but I have never thought much on the subject ; I have been more taken up in observing the different modes of catching

those I have found best to eat ; and see, there is one of your friends, a spider crab ; he has come out with the tide, and is now employed in scraping our oyster shells."

Hope looked where Cross was pointing. In eating their oysters the shells had been thrown into a hollow in the rock ; this now stood full of water about six inches deep, and on the centre of the heap of white shells lay something like a bunch of small sea-weed.

"It is a crab," said Hope, "for I saw him move, and we may pass away the time by watching his movements."

"You must keep very still then," said Cross, "for if we move he will not."

They remained very quiet, and after a while, they observed the animal slip very slowly from one shell to the other, evidently eating any small remnants of fish that remained.

"I wonder what they live on in general," said Hope, "for it is not often, I suspect, that people come out here to eat oysters."

"I imagine," replied Cross, "that they catch fish for themselves, for I once saw one who had a live fish in his claws. I cannot help thinking that nature has given them this covering of sea-ware on their shell as much to aid them in the pursuit of their prey as to protect

them from enemies. Their motions are so slow that they could never catch anything so nimble as a fish, unless the fish went to them ; it is for this reason that I think their covering is given to aid them in procuring their food. There are a vast number of fish who hide themselves under stones—such as sea-loach, bullheads, and rock-fish or sea-perch ; all these go under every stone they pass ; now, if you are deceived in thinking this crab a stone or a bunch of sea-weed, we may well suppose that a fish may make the same mistake. If they did so, and ran under him as they do under other stones, they would find themselves, as the Yankees say, in a very unhandsome fix ; for the crab has only to grasp as he does the iron hook, and it is all up with poor fishy, whatever sort he may be ; besides which the crab may be able to snap up some of the insects that make these rocks, and serve them right, since looking at them nearly converted us into food for fishes. If we had been drowned, I have no doubt some of these beauties would have found us out and had a taste of us ; practically answering your question as to what they live on by eating a bit of you.”

“What a horrid idea,” said Hope ; “the very thought of being eaten by a brute like that makes me colder than ever.”

"Phoo! nonsense," said Cross; "what would it signify? How go the lines?"

'A good fat priest is a dainty meal,
And I'll have my share with the pike and the eel.'

I suppose any stout gentlemen would do as well as a priest; and for pike read crab and the lines will do; and why should they not try how you tasted? You have been making very anxious inquiries regarding their flesh, and as they cannot speak, it would be quite fair that they should put the question practically; but thanks to our little friend here, they have been balked for this time."

"You are a horrid fellow," said Hope, "and you have quite prevented my having any wish to taste these creatures."

"You are very dainty," replied Cross; "I only wish I had a few well dressed, and I would make an example of them; for, to say the truth, in spite of our oysters I feel horridly hungry. I could even eat a dish of eels, which I never very much liked, for I was told a story that quite put me off touching them."

"And what might that be?" said Hope; "it must be something very bad."

"Why," said Cross, "the story of the widow and her drowned husband."

“I never heard it,” said Hope.

“Oh, you dear innocent creature! What a pleasure it is to find a grown gentleman who does not know one’s old stories!”

“I can afford you that pleasure,” said Hope, “for I am fully grown and never heard it; so pray tell it to me.”

“Why, you must know then,” said Cross, “that there once lived a man and a wife who were not on the best terms. One fine morning the man was missing, and nothing could be heard of him for a fortnight. The wife pretended to be in great distress, so much so that when his body was at last found in a fish-pond near the house, no one liked to tell her, more especially as the finding was accompanied with what they thought would shock her dreadfully; namely, that when the poor fellow was pulled out of the water a great quantity of eels fell on the grass from his body; the fact was he was full of them!

“At last a friend undertook to break the intelligence, and receive the widow’s instructions. This he did, not omitting to mention the eels. The story told, he asked what were her wishes, as he was anxious, together with the rest of her friends, to obey her orders.

“The widow removed her handkerchief from her

eyes, and murmured out, 'Send home the eels and *set him again*—I am very fond of eels.'

"You nasty fellow," said Hope, "I am half frozen already, and your story makes my flesh creep ; I am fast losing what little warmth I had."

"I am sorry I told it then," said Cross, "for I am as cold as a frog myself, and have been talking nonsense to pass the time and to try to make us forget where we are. Since my stories make you colder, let us move about a bit ; our territory is becoming larger ; quite enough to have a short race. I will give you ten yards and run you a hundred."

"That would have done very well in the morning," said Hope, "but I am much too stiff for anything of the sort just now ; you forget that your younger blood does not cool as fast as mine, for I have twenty years the start of you."

"Well, let us walk then ; take my arm and we will make the round of our island ; it will be something to do and keep us in motion."

"We must not forget our little friend here," said Hope, "although she is as quiet as a mouse, and never complains."

"We will ask her to come with us," said Cross, "but as I told you, she has forgot cold and hunger ; she is

admiring your silk handkerchief and the five-franc pieces in the corner—she is building castles in the air, and thinking how she shall expend her riches ; but we may as well disturb her dreams and make her join our walk, for she will be able to tell us when it will be safe to start from our present kingdom—Marie,” he called.

“Did you call me?” said the girl, starting from her reverie ; “my name is not Marie, I am Matilde.”

“And a very pretty name,” said Cross ; “will you come with us and tell us how much longer we must stay here?”

“Willingly,” she replied ; “but there is not much use yet, for when the tide turns it goes out quickly for a little and then stops a while ; after which it falls very fast. The back wave has not come yet, and till then we must not think of moving.”

“To prevent being benumbed we must follow my first plan then,” said Cross, “and make the tour of our island.”

He took Hope’s arm and they began their walk, but it was no easy job, for it was now nearly dark, and they stumbled and slipped at every step. Cross insisted on going on, and dragged Hope with him ; after groping and stumbling for a considerable time they found themselves again on their old platform. Hope was bored to

death, tired, and out of breath ; but they were no longer cold, and they had got over a good portion of their time. They could no longer distinguish what was on the shore, but the line of the high promontory could be seen against the sky.

“Surely those are lights,” said Hope. The little girl called out at the same moment, “See ! there are lanterns—they are coming to guide us.”

Sure enough three lights could be seen coming down the hill ; they stopped at the shore.

“Shall we look now,” said Matilde, “if we can venture ?”

“But how will you be able to know in the dark,” asked Hope, “whether we can venture or not ?”

“If the passage where the gentleman carried me over is dry,” said Matilde, “it will be safe to go ; but not till then.”

“Let us see then how it is,” said Hope, “for I shall not be sorry to leave our present quarters ; I own I never found time pass so slowly before.”

It was now quite dark, and they stumbled more than ever in walking to the creek in the rocks which Matilde called the passage ; when they reached it, there was still a good deal of water running rapidly through, but it was not up to their knees in depth, and was running

in the contrary direction to that in which it was raging when they passed it in the morning ; so they waded through and continued their course over the remainder of the rock, which they knew they had to pass before reaching the broad extent of sand which lay between them and the shore. Fear and daylight had made these rocks seem shorter than they now found them ; and they had several more slips and tumbles to undergo before they reached the outer edge ; when they got there the sand was not visible, but they had the pleasure of perceiving that the lights were advancing towards them.

“ In for a penny, in for a pound,” said Cross ; “ we are so wet we may as well walk at once ; the water cannot be deep now.” He slid into the water, which was but little above his knees ; the rest followed, and they began their way rejoicing, stepping out towards the advancing lights ; at each minute the water became more shallow, and when they joined the party who were carrying the lanterns, they were once more on dry ground. The party consisted of an old woman, a tall handsome girl, and a young man, each carrying a lantern ; several other young men and girls were following. When the party from the rock came within range of the light, the old woman ran forward, embraced Matilde tenderly, then

put down her lantern, cried violently, and ended by scolding her like a pickpocket.

Matilde bore these various paroxysms with great patience ; we suppose she was used to them, but when the scolding had continued a moderate time she said—

“The gentlemen are wet, do not keep them waiting, mother ; see how generous they have been to me ;” and she put the two ends of her handkerchief with the contents into her mother’s hand, who immediately ceased scolding, and began to bless her child and the two gentlemen.

“The party then continued their course towards the shore, the young man leading the way. The tall girl fell back ; she took off a coarse woollen shawl which she wore, and placed it on Matilde’s shoulders. “Poor little one, you must be cold,” she said.

“O Angela ! how kind of you to come, and I not to see you,” said Matilde, as she put her arms round her neck, and then she burst out laughing—“We have eaten all your oysters, and they were so good !”

“You are welcome, little one,” returned her companion, “although I did not eat your bread ; I gave it to your mother.”

“You are always good to me,” said Matilde ; “and these gentlemen have been so kind, they have given me

all this money and this beautiful shawl ; and listen," she whispered, " they have promised to give you one like it, to pay for your oysters, and to buy me a dress like your sister's."

" They are very good to think of me," said Angela ; " but you saved them, and I am glad they are grateful, for you deserve it at their hands."

" Is that your friend Angela ?" said Hope ; " ask her to come to us this evening, we wish to speak to her. When you have got some dry clothes, you must come and get something to eat, and bring her and your mother with you. I hope," he continued to Cross, " we shall be able to get something for them when they come."

" No fear of that," said Cross, " with the Marquis to act as caterer we shall not want ; but, poor man, what a state he will be in ; no cook can forgive the person who is too late, and when a man is to eat, as well as to superintend the cooking of the dinner, to keep him waiting is a double crime. I suspect we shall find him in a very bad humour."

" We cannot help it," said Hope, " so we must do our best to soothe him when we meet. If eating what he has prepared will please him, I shall succeed, for I feel dreadfully wolfish. I wish I had my feet in a pail

of hot water and his dinner before me, and I would astonish him."

"You propose two things in one sentence," said Cross, "not easily done—first, to get a foot-pail and hot water ; secondly, to astonish the Marquis. But nothing is impossible, they say, to a willing hand. I will do my best to get you a foot-bath, and you must try what you can do yourself to eat up to our friend ; for if you do you may astonish him."

This was the last thing like conversation that passed between any of the party till they reached their quarters; for as Cross ceased to speak they arrived at the beach ; the ascent was heavy through the loose sand, for they had to clamber up the steep face of the rocky point, and then to walk along a narrow path and a bad road for half a mile, before reaching their door.

Stiff with remaining wet for so many hours, Hope saw the lights of the village with great satisfaction. At the first turn they came on a house better lighted than any other. At the door stood the Marquis in black trousers, silk stockings, a smart silk waistcoat, a white neckcloth with very large bows, but a linen coat like that of an English under-butler in the morning when about to clean his plate. He held a white apron in his hand, which he began to tie round his waist the moment

the Englishmen and their party came in sight. He was in a commiserative, not in an angry mood, which they learnt by his first exclamation.

“Here you are at last, and alive, *Grâce à Dieu !* what you must have suffered from hunger ; you must be famished ! Dinner late, and you three hours later. I thought of you while I ate my little morsel, and the thought was so painful, I could not enjoy anything ; but now that you are here I feel my force restored, and I hope I shall be able to do justice to the supper, with which I trust you will be pleased ; for the news of your situation arrived here in time to enable me to prevent the pans being put to the fire, and the moment I heard the tide had turned, and that you were safe, I made them put our roast in order, and you see the fours are burning bright, and the casseroles are ready to be put down in a moment. How long will you be, that we may make our calculations ?”

While the Marquis was thus running on, Hope and Cross had followed him into the apartment which, in fact, was both the kitchen and dining-room of the little inn. It was beautifully clean, and coming out of the dark, the light from the fire, lamps, and candles, made it so bright, it was a moment before they could see. When their eyes became accustomed to the brilliancy, which it

did while the Marquis was speaking, they saw the table spread on one side of the fireplace ; the cloth was covered with several dishes, on which were piled pears of various sorts, blue plums and greengages, apricots, two large pyramids of prawns, and a huge melon. Round the fire were a number of pots and pans, deep sunk in hot embers ; before it was a long semicircular tin case, something between a plate-warmer and a Dutch oven ; this case surrounded a spit, which was turning merrily. All the little charcoal stoves were glowing bright ; beside them stood some covered stew-pans and a frying-pan, and at a little distance on either side were two of the beehive-looking baskets. All this they saw at a glance, so that when the Marquis inquired when they could be ready, Cross answered, "In a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes." •

"Then let us say twenty minutes, and be exact," said the Marquis, "and in that time all will be in order." He opened a little trap door in the top of the tin case, and shewed a small leg of mutton which had just been put down, lifted the baskets and exhibited the fish, prepared for putting in the pots and frying-pans, and pointed to the various other preparations which were standing round the stoves. We forgot to mention that, in addition to the many articles that were around and in front

of the fire, there hung above it one of the very large brass pans, which they had seen used for making the cabbage soup. Their attention was drawn to this by a question which Hope asked, namely, whether there would be enough to give something to eat to the little girl who had saved them, together with her mother and friend?

"The soup is excellent," said the Marquis, "and we shall have plenty left from our dinner."

Cross looked into the large pan.

"Not that," said the Marquis, "but this," pointing to one of the pots that was by the side of the fire; "and I advise you to take a small cup while you are dressing—it will warm you, and prevent you being detained from the more solid nourishment which I hope to offer you when you are dressed."

"Very good advice," said Cross; "so away you go and get your wet things off. I will be after you in a minute, but I must see what I can do for your foot-bath."

Hope willingly followed this advice; the warm room and the sight of the fire had made him feel even more chilly than when he was in the air. He followed the hostess, who led the way out of the house and up an outside stair into a large double-bedded room. There

was a fire on the hearth, and the boy who had driven them was in attendance to offer his services—N.B., a most extraordinary instance of attention, for it is rare to find a Norman boy volunteer anything that will give him trouble.

The hostess offered to dry his feet, and produced a bundle of coarse white towels.

This service Hope refused with thanks, but expressed his great wish to have some hot water.

The hostess replied that she would see what could be done, took a small ewer out of another vessel that looked like a pie dish, and left the room. The said ewer and pie dish were the only preparations which the room afforded for washing.

Hope bade the boy unstrap and open his portman-teau, while he began to drag off the wet garments which were sticking to him. He was uncomfortable, and rather sulky at being disappointed in finding no means of washing off the clammy feeling of the salt water. At this moment the door opened, and Cross and the Marquis's servant made their appearance, carrying between them the identical large brass pan that had been hanging above the fire in the kitchen. In the other hand Cross bore a second pan of the same sort, only smaller, and behind him came the hostess with a bucket of cold

water. She was laughing immoderately, and repeating, "They are a queer set these English lords."

Cross made her a number of fine speeches, and begged her to go to the Marquis, who would be in despair at her absence ; then poured a share of the hot water into the lesser pan, added cold till the heat was reduced to a bearable temperature, placed the large pan before Hope, and the lesser in front of another chair, and told him there was a bath fit for a king, and to make the most of it.

Hope roared with laughing, but in half a minute he was robed in his dressing-gown and sighing with the comfort of having his feet in this new-fangled foot-pail, which comfort was by no means reduced by the re-entrance of the Marquis's boy with two cups of excellent soup.

Cross did not allow his companion to luxuriate for any time in his comforts ; he urged haste, and so effectually that the twenty minutes were very little exceeded when they again entered the kitchen and dining-hall.

The Marquis was in all his glory. When they entered he vanished for a moment and then returned in a coat of the last Paris cut, looking and acting the Marquis of the old school to perfection, as he begged the friends to place themselves at table. Hope, as he looked

at him, saw that Cross had been right, for he no longer recognised the ragged fisherman or the professed cook in the highbred-looking gentleman before him. They had brought down with them a couple of bottles of the wine which Hope had stowed away in the seat of the carriage—one of champagne and one of sauterne—which they placed on the table.

“Ah! you have foresight, I see,” said the Marquis; “this white wine is an addition. I have been able to procure you a bottle of Spanish wine, which you English like, and also a couple of bottles of very superior Bordeaux from my friend the curé. He is an excellent judge, and I can trust to his taste;—but here comes our roast.”

“Are we to have none of the fish?” asked Hope in a whisper.

“Yes, by and bye,” answered Cross, in the same tone; “but you must eat according to the plan of our Amphitricion to-day; if you don’t like it, we will alter it to-morrow.”

This whispered conversation was not heard or noticed by the Marquis, for he was employed in cutting the melon into slices, and his boy was placing on the table the plumpest but smallest leg of mutton Hope had ever seen. The melon being cut up, the Marquis

performed the same ceremony on the mutton, which the boy carried round to each of the party, who helped himself as he liked ; the melon was then presented in like manner ; Cross took a goodly slice, but Hope refused.

“ My dear sir, you are wrong,” said the Marquis ; “ I assure you the melon is a very good one, or perhaps you do not like to eat it with your roast ? I have before met some of your countrymen who have the bad prejudice of not liking melon with their meat, and prefer to eat it with sugar at dessert ; if you have this unfortunate predilection, my dear sir, let me pray you to give it up ; melon after dinner is a villanous nutriment, it lies in a cold lump and never digests, but when eaten with your roast it gives zest to your food and adds strength and freshness to your stomach, preparing an excellent foundation for the rest of your meal.”

Hope caught Cross’s eye, so he helped himself to a slice of the rejected melon, followed the example of the Marquis by sprinkling it over with salt and pepper, and was surprised, on trying the mixture, to find that roast mutton and melon were very good together.

Cross, who remarked that the Marquis had given rather a contemptuous glance at Hope, thought it right to make an apology for his friend.

“ My friend Mr. Hope,” he said, “ has not been long

in this country, and, I grieve to say, for a man who is well instructed in other matters, he is sadly deficient in his duty to himself at table ; but, as he is willing to learn, I hope, my dear Marquis, you will kindly give him your advice, and, in asking this favour at your hands, I am aware I do him a great service."

"It will give me very great pleasure," said the Marquis ; "and I am glad to see that Mr. Hope already appreciates the only way of eating a melon ; but now let us have our fish."

"My friend," said Hope, "has told you how ignorant I am ; indeed, many of my countrymen are in the same state, for we begin with fish, then taste an entrée, and end with the roast ; we think that fish is apt to taste insipid after meat."

"You make a great mistake, my dear sir, by your arrangement ; you reserve your palate for the strong food to the last, eating your choicest plats when the stomach is voracious, and you swallow the best exertions of your cook so quickly that you neither do justice to him nor to yourself. Now, by beginning with a small bit of roast, you imbibe the solid nutriment at a moment when you can best bear this coarser viand ; your fish follows, to fire the palate with its mild and delicate juices, and prepare you fully to feel and appreciate the

exertions and talents of your cook." While he spoke he was cutting up the bass, which was served plain-boiled. "Let me call your attention to a sauce of shrimps which has been prepared, and which I can recommend to your notice ; it is more peppery than we generally like ; however, pepper in this case is not only excusable but laudable, as you will find."

Hope and Cross helped themselves to a portion of the fish, and to the sauce, and obtained a smile of approbation by praising it loudly ; the sauce was a compound of pounded shrimps stewed into a sort of paste.

The brill was carried round after the bass, and while they were eating it the sputtering sound of the frying-pan could be heard ; the Marquis rose from the table and went to the mistress of the house, who was busy at one of the little stoves ; some instructions were given and he returned.

"Let us," he said, "take a small glass of this Spanish wine, and then I must beg you to try the cuttle-fish ; I have taken them under my own special care, and I am anxious they should please you, for I can answer that the eyes were properly extracted, and every fish has been well hammered."

"Hammered !" said Hope ; "is that necessary ?"

"Not perhaps with these young ones ; but even with

them it does no harm ; a few good taps with a hammer insure that there shall be no little hardness to give trouble in mastication."

The Spanish wine, as it was called, was handed round. It was hot, bad Madeira, but the friends had too much good tact to say what they thought of it, so they washed the fiery taste from their mouths with a tumbler of the weak claret and water, which Hope had already learnt it was etiquette to drink.

A dish was now brought forward ; it was divided in the centre by a slice of toast ; on one side of the toast was a mass of cuttle-fish stewed with a white sauce ; on the other a pile of them beautifully fried ; they were of a clear even colour, without the slightest appearance of grease.

The Englishmen helped themselves. Hope did not like the stewed portion, but both agreed that nothing in the shape of fish could be better than those that were fried ; they said so,—and Hope remarked on the total want of grease.

"Ah, my dear friends, I see that you are by no means so ignorant as you are pleased to say. You can judge of good frying. It is a great art, too often sadly neglected. Frying is, in fact, boiling in oleaginous matter ; but if there be too little liquid in your pan,

only half your object is boiled ; the other is warmed into a greasy mass of half-done viand, by the drops that are thrown up and fall on the upper surface, there remaining to displease the eye and disgust the palate. To fry, the object must be totally immersed at once in the heated mass of liquid oleaginous matter ; for the rule is the same whether you use lard, butter or olive oil. The first and greatest care of the good cook is to see that there be plenty of liquid in the pan ; the second, that the liquid be of a proper temperament, and nothing, in fact, is easier if proper attention be paid to what you are about, and a fault-like negligence is inexcusable in so momentous a matter. Having seen that a proper quantity of oil, butter, or lard, as the case may be, is put into your pan, place it on the fire and let it heat till you have obtained the proper temperature. To learn when this has arrived, have ready several small sticks of bread and dip them from time to time in the liquid. When the heat is enough, you will see that the bread, on being held for a few seconds, becomes of a clear brown colour. When you have a small object to fry, now is your time ; plunge it in and lift the pan a little above the fire, for the heat must not be allowed to increase, or your object becomes too dark in colour—it is burnt in short. When your object is large, then

you must allow the colour of the bread, when you withdraw it, to be more strongly pronounced ; for the immersion of a large object, a sole, for instance, will reduce the temperature to the proper tone, and at that you must regulate it, neither allowing it to be too hot nor too cold. By attending to this you will always find the colour clear and bright, and not in the slightest degree greasy in appearance. You should always take care, too, that the egg for your pané should be very thinly and evenly laid on ; to insure this, the white only should be used and beaten for a long time, and when spread it should be allowed to dry for a little before adding your bread-crumbs or flour. For myself, I always prefer what I have used to-day, namely, the flour of the haricot-bean very finely ground."

Hope listened, and kept his countenance wonderfully during this lecture on frying. Cross did still better, for he produced a pencil, and pretended to take notes of the marked passages ; when it was ended, they both returned thanks to the Marquis. The entrées were then called for, and another glass of wine was handed round ; while this was being drunk, the door opened, and the party whom Hope had invited entered—Angela led.

"Will you allow them to come to our table?" said Hope, addressing the Marquis.

"By all means, ask them," he replied ; "but I doubt if they will come, for they are modest, even the men are not presuming ; in the interior, they would come without being invited."

Hope and Cross both rose and pressed the party to join their table ; but they declined, and seated themselves at another nearer the door, where the two Englishmen insisted on seeing them served with soup and the remains of their mutton and fish, before they seated themselves again at their table. The Marquis was put out when they came back, which Cross saw.

"I am afraid," he said, "we have been indiscreet in asking these people to dine here, but I hope you will forgive the consumption of the mutton, which certainly would make a capital hash for breakfast, for that little girl saved our lives, and the other two are her mother and friend."

"They are welcome to the mutton," said the Marquis, "for I hate a hash even of the best materials ; fortunately, when I knew you were to be here for a day or two, I saw the sheep from which that gigot was cut, and I bought the whole animal—at least, I made the host do so, which is the same thing. I was not thinking of the mutton, we shall be able to spare that, but our two plats will be ruined by the delay, and that is mortifying."

The Englishmen sat down and renewed their apologies, till a dish of côtelettes was produced, which was replaced by a duck stuffed with olives. The Marquis recovered his good humour, for he declared both excellent ; and the friends, to please him, ate of each, though they thought the duck and olives detestable. They were strong in hopes that they had then done enough, but the tin case before the fire was opened, and three quails rolled in bacon and vine-leaves made their appearance, and they were bound each to consume his bird, nor did they find it a difficult task ; for as Hope said, a man must be very far gone, when he cannot eat a quail that has been roasted in a greatcoat of bacon. But this finished them, and the Marquis had to discuss alone three plates of dressed vegetables and a salad, which were produced in succession, and he ended with a compote of all sorts of fruit boiled in syrup, and a pot of strawberry jam.

This concluded the serious part of the dinner ; dressed crab and the pyramids of prawns were then put down, and the Englishmen felt bound to taste of them as part of the day's sport ; and in spite of all they had done before, they found them excellent. During dinner, though we have not mentioned it, both claret and sauterne made the round of the table. When the sweets

appeared, the champagne was opened, and at the dessert the curé's claret was discussed with very little difficulty and no remark. It was first rate, and proved, that in trusting to him, the Marquis had not leant on a broken reed. Matilde and her party had eaten their dinner very quietly ; a bottle of wine and some cider had been sent them, a little of which they drank, and during the time the Marquis was finishing off his salad, the two friends had spoken to them ; but in spite of "*liberté, égalité*," they were shy and respectful, and as soon as they had finished eating, they rose, curtsied, and left the room. As they were going, Cross told Matilde to return the next morning at ten, that they might arrange about her dress, and pay Angela for her oysters. .

When the claret was finished, cups of excellent coffee were handed round, with the usual little glass of old brandy, and then the Marquis proposed cards. Both the friends hated play, so they begged to be excused on the score of fatigue after their long day. The Marquis looked vexed, but said that he too was so tired, that without a little *lansquenet* or *écarté* he could not keep his eyes open ; so in half an hour they all adjourned to their rooms.

"I don't think I shall sleep much," said Hope ; "or if I do I am sure of the nightmare ; such roughing as

this would give any man a fit of apoplexy in a fortnight."

"You are not far wrong ; but everybody who comes here has not the Marquis for caterer and cook. Had we been alone, there would have been no fear of your getting a surfeit ; but as it is, he has shewn that the material is in the country, and when aided by native talent, a man may live in a fishing village on the coast of Normandy."

"When do we breakfast?" asked Hope, as he stepped into bed.

"You may get a cup of coffee and a bit of bread quietly here, whenever you like ; but if you wish to avoid giving deadly offence to our friend, you must hold yourself prepared to eat as much breakfast as you did dinner to-day ; and that not until twelve o'clock."

"Well, good-night," said Hope ; and in spite of his fears of the nightmare, in five minutes he was as fast as the seven sleepers. The beds were a perfect model of cleanliness and comfort.

Notwithstanding their fatigue they were awake at an early hour, and talked for some little time as to what they could do that would be of more permanent advantage to Matilde than a dress. Cross proposed that he should get up and consult the master of the inn, who

was an honest man, and knew all the people in the country, while Hope lay still and got a cup of coffee in his bed. The long time he had sat wet told more on him than on his younger companion, and he was not sorry to avail himself of the proposal. The tide would be later to-day, and they could not see the nets, lines, or stone fisheries till nearly two o'clock. The girl was not to come till ten, so till then he determined to lie still and read. Cross got up and dressed. An old tub had taken the place of the brass pan, and enabled him to make his ablutions with something like comfort.

Shortly before the hour Hope had fixed for rising, Cross returned with the landlady bearing a cup of coffee. When she had put the room in order and refilled the tub, which seemed to amuse her amazingly, she departed, and Cross then reported that he had found out that the small garden that lay close to the house where Matilde's mother lived, was for sale, and could be bought for a hundred and fifty francs—six pounds English—that the purchase was a great bargain, and would be quite a fortune to their little friend. Hope said he would willingly join in the purchase, so, while he was dressing, Cross again started to try and conclude the bargain, that everything might be arranged if possible by the time the girl and her mother came. The landlord undertook to be the

agent, and the landlady to give them their breakfast, and keep them engaged till Cross came back, should any delay take place ; but he succeeded. The owner was more anxious to sell than they to buy. The papers were all in order, and signed with a rapidity unknown to Norman transactions ; and by a quarter past ten, Cross, Hope, the landlord of the inn, and a notary, were standing in front of the inn, with everything settled to enable them to give possession of the diminutive property, which would make the brave little girl a proprietor. As Cross had taken all the trouble, Hope insisted that he should also have the pleasure of being spokesman, reserving to himself the giving of another of his silk handkerchiefs, and a five-franc piece to Angela, who was to be employed to buy the dress they had promised to little Matilde.

When the old woman and the two girls arrived, all was done as they had arranged ; the dress was to be procured, cross and all, for fifty francs, and then Cross presented the deeds in his own and his friend's name, making a short laudatory speech in honour of their little friend's bravery and presence of mind.

At first she did not understand what had been done ; she only knew that she had received praise and some bits of paper : she therefore smiled and blushed ; but

when it was explained to her that she was a landed proprietor—that the garden she had hitherto assisted to till was now her own, and that her mother must now pay rent to her and no one else, then indeed, she became wild with delight—she laughed, wept, danced, and clapped her hands—asked every one if it was not too wonderful to be true, and darting off, she seized the hands of her benefactors and pressed them alternately to her lips, saying over and over again, “How good! how generous! how magnificent you have been to me!”

Hope had not been long enough on the Continent to relish having his hand kissed—he withdrew it from her grasp, stooped down, and pressed his lips to her forehead. Cross took the hand-kissing more as a matter of course; but he too embraced the little girl as Hope had done, and then gave his hand to her mother, who first kissed her own, as a Highland peasant does, and then pressed alternately the hands of the two Englishmen.

Angela did the same, saying as she did so, “You are good and generous; but Matilde deserves it.” As for the mother, all her volubility was gone; she only once said, “May Heaven bless you both.”

A crowd began to gather; it is wonderful how news flies in a small place. Hope hated a public scene; more especially as he felt his heart shockingly soft, and was

half inclined to weep. "Come away," he said to Cross, "tell them to get their breakfast, and to make the notary explain anything they may wish to know ; let us be off at any rate. I should like to go as far as the headland, and see our last night's post from thence." Hope turned away and Cross did as he was requested, and followed the moment after. The two friends walked gently on for some little time in silence.

"Well, Cross," said Hope, breaking this silence, "my worm-hunting got us into a scrape, and has cost us five pounds apiece. I do not regret it, and I hope you do not either, for, oh ! what a pleasure it is to make others so happy at so small a cost ; for to me the sight of that little girl's delight was worth five times the money."

"And to me also," said Cross ; "and yet if one thinks of it, it ought to make us sad and ashamed ; for what sums have I wasted in folly that might have made hundreds as happy as she is now !"

"Don't let us think of that," said Hope ; "my present pleasure is too great to allow me to look back on so sad a remembrance ; let the lesson be a guide for the future, not a punishment for the past."

They had cleared the village, and were then ascending the hill leading to the headland. Rather a handsome pointer and a little mongrel galloped past them, and a

sharp whistle sounded behind ; on turning to see who it was, they recognised their landlord, gun in hand, who was following them at a great pace. They paused till he joined them.

“You are going shooting,” said Cross, when he came up ; “what do you expect to find ?”

“I may perhaps get a partridge or a hare, and I know where there are some quails ; at all events, I have promised to get a dish of white-tails (wheat-ears) for the Marquis, as he considers them worthy of being put before you, and he thinks you have never tasted them.”

“He is wrong there,” said Hope, “for we have eaten them often ; but in our country they are much more often caught than shot.”

“I should like to know how that is done,” said the host ; “for, to tell you the truth, when powder and shot are so dear, I do not much like expending it on such small game,—you never can get more than one at a shot.”

“It is easily shewn,” said Hope ; “and I never saw a better place to try for them than this hill ; there are so many lumps of square slaty stones lying about, that you can never be at a loss for a fall.”

A peg and perch were cut from a dwarf bush, and with a knife a hole was soon formed in the short turf,

and then the trap so well known on the Downs in the south of England was set ; the landlord made another at a short distance, under Hope's tuition, and they continued their walk, the sportsman abstaining from firing, though the birds were numerous, at the recommendation of Hope, who told him that he might shoot there on his return, when he came to look at the traps, if nothing was caught.

The two friends then directed their course to the point, and the landlord turned to the right, towards a hollow that ran more to the northward, the sides of which were covered with scrubby heath and dwarf whin, while the tops of the banks were sown with corn and buckwheat.

When they reached the point, the view was most extensive, too much so for beauty ; it was the same they had seen from the lower ledge of the same point the day before, and, though interesting from its extent and variety, still, from the height where they stood, it was too map-like to be altogether pleasing. Having glanced around, the eyes of both fixed on the rock where they had passed the disagreeable hours of the previous evening.

“Our kingdom was mighty small,” said Hope.

“And it has got some other bipeds to reign over it

to-day," said Cross. "Do you see what a flock of birds are sitting where we did yesterday?"

"I do," said Hope; "they look like curlews."

"And so I believe they are," said Cross. "I have not seen them here myself before, but I have heard that they come down here in large flocks at this time of the year, and remain all the winter."

"And where can they come from?" said Hope; "there are no hills or moors for them to breed on that I know of near here."

"But there are plenty in Brittany," replied Cross; "and I have heard that they breed there. I believe it, because I have myself seen large quantities of young broods on the great flat near Dole. The sands there differ from those here, for they are so quick that it is most dangerous to walk on them, and the shore is a swamp. Early in August the young curlews go there, and we may easily suppose that from thence they spread along the coast as they gain strength of wing; or one flock may drive away another to seek more distant quarters, and so oblige them to leave the flats at Dole and to come here; added to which, I suspect our friends the worms, that made us stay so long where they now sit, may have some attraction for their long bills, as well as for you."

"I think," said Hope, "it is the middle or latter end

of August before the curlews come down on our shores, and, by what you say, they must be a fortnight or three weeks earlier in this country."

"Just about it," said Cross; "but I think that all birds that are natives and bred in this country are about a fortnight in advance of us—except the birds of passage, and they arrive almost on the same day here that they do with us—both those which come to breed and those which come to hibernate. Of the first of these I may mention the nightingale and the landrail, whose voices may be heard almost on the same day that they are in England. This very spring I received a letter from a friend, in which it was said, 'there is a nightingale now singing under the window; it is the first time we have heard him this year.' Now on the very day this letter was written, I was fishing up the river at Ducie. In coming home late I heard a nightingale, and remarked to a friend who was with me that I heard him for the first time that year;—clearly shewing that they must arrive at the same time in the two countries; and the same rule applies to the winter birds; one instance of which I may tell you, for it is very marked. I had the means of observing very narrowly the arrival of the brent geese—oie-cravant as they call them here. It was in a bay in Scotland where I used to watch them; and for five suc-

cessive years the first flock was seen on the 16th of September. Well, last year, on the 18th of September, I went out in one of the trawling-boats, and took the gun with me. We sailed through a flock of these birds and put them up. I shot one, so that there could be no mistake. It was lean and evidently tired ; for it sat so close as to allow me to get within shot of it, proving that it was lately arrived ; but, from the number in the flock, it was not the first. In the flock I mention there were at least two hundred birds. Now in all the first flocks that I have seen arrive there never were more than twenty birds, who seemed to be the advanced guard of the great mass that came a few days later ; and, supposing that the same thing happens in France and in Scotland, I should say that the first oie-cravant arrives on the same day here that the brent goose does in the bays of Ireland and Scotland."

"That is curious," said Hope, "and as I am anxious to see their method of trawling on this coast, if you will go with me we will choose the eighteenth of September, for I should like much to prove if these birds are as regular in their arrival here, as you have found them in Scotland."

The feathered bipeds had absorbed so much of the attention of the friends, that they had taken little notice

of a large party of bathers who had been swimming below them. The sound of voices advancing up the hill now drew their observation to the path, where a number of people came in sight: among these was the Marquis. After an exchange of greeting, the Marquis pulled out his watch, and urged the Englishmen to remember that they had only half an hour to wait till breakfast would be served, and also reminded them that any delay or want of punctuality after bathing was a downright vice. They consequently turned towards the village, but as they had plenty of time they walked slowly, and made a slight detour to see what their host was about, having heard his gun several times. On reaching the edge of the hollow, they saw the pointer standing at a dead point. The sportsman was hastening up the bank towards the dog, but before he came within shot, the mongrel that was with him dashed forward and sprung a bevy of seven quails. The birds passed close by the two friends, and flew straight to the clump of brushwood and whin, where Hope had cut the pegs for the traps. There they lit; the friends marked them to an inch; and when the sportsman had mounted the hill, they shewed him exactly where they were, and the whole three took their way towards the spot.

“What makes you take such a brute as that out

with you?" asked Hope, as he pointed to the mongrel. From the curl of his tail he certainly had in his blood a cross of the famille Trompette, and as a hunter of eels he might have distinguished himself; but springing birds before a pointer, as he had just done, seemed to Hope's English notion of sporting, a decided proof that he ought only to be allowed to hunt when a pickaxe, and not a gun, was in the hands of the sportsman. But this did not accord with the pot-hunting ideas of our Norman chasseur, for in answer to Hope's query he replied —

"He is no brute, he is an incomparable chien de chasse, as you will allow, when I shew you that this very day he has caught me two landrails. Those birds, which are so good to eat, are very provoking, for they run away, and you can never see them to get a shot at them; but when my good little Favourite is with me, they find themselves in a bad position, for if they fly I shoot them, and if they run he snaps them up, and either way they go into my bag. And then for a hare, if I have the good luck to find one, and do not kill him at once, you may believe me, that animal will chase him so long and so well, that he is forced to double. If he returns, as he is sure to do, on his own steps, I have him again, and I am certain not to miss twice. We have not found a hare to-day, but we put up two land-

rails in the bottom, and, thanks to him, they are now in my bag, and you will eat them for dinner. I have been very successful too, for I have shot three white-tails and a quail, so you will not want for game if I do not get any more to-day."

Hope was hardly able to resist bursting out into a roar of laughter at this description of a good sporting dog. Cross was not so much amused, as he had been longer in the country, and the merit of running a hare for half a day was not new to him; but when they were close to the spot where the quails had alighted, he suggested the propriety of tying up Favourite till they had been found by the pointer.

To this proposal mine host agreed, and owing to that arrangement the quails were sprung in detail, and out of five fair shots three birds were killed; the remaining four flew to a field of buckwheat, where they were safe from further pursuit for that day.

When they had started all the quails, they were close to the first trap. Hope saw that the fall was down, and pointed it out to the landlord, who ran up and gave a shout of pleasure, exclaiming, "It is something quite astonishing; by our Lady, here is one!"

Cross and Hope, who followed more slowly, came up to him, and sure enough there lay a wheatear. The

stone in falling had caught him by the head, and the bird was dead. The landlord was in a great state of excitement, declaring that it was astonishing, marvellous, and that Hope was a man of great talent.

"I am glad you are pleased," said Hope, "but we are in haste ; so set the trap yourself that I may see that you know how to do it ; then we will examine the other and go home to breakfast. We must not keep the Marquis waiting."

"True, true," said mine host ; "he would be in a sad state, for he would not know that I have learnt how to secure him a dish of white-tails at any time."

The trap was set and they went to the second. It too, was down, and the bird was alive within it. Hope shewed his pupil how to take it out, and then with Cross they walked rapidly to their inn.

As they walked, Cross asked if it was not extraordinary luck to catch two birds in so short a time.

"No," answered Hope ; "the birds here are very numerous, and I have always found that the fresh-made traps catch the best. When I was a boy, I used to amuse myself often at this sport, and the new-made traps were always the most successful."

"But what induces the birds to go in?" asked Cross, "for you put no bait."

“Why,” replied Hope, “I suspect that wheat-ears, like your sea-loach and sea-perch, have an inquisitive turn of mind, and like to look under every stone they pass ; or perhaps, as they live on insects, the new-turned soil may lead them to examine it for food, and I am guided in the last supposition by finding that the fresh traps catch the most.”

“That seems probable,” said Cross, “and I have learnt something to-day, as well as our landlord. But I am surprised that he did not already know this mode of saving his powder and shot, for the French are a very ingenious people.”

“Yes ; but what is more surprising,” said Hope, “is, that this most simple of all traps was unknown in Italy. When I was there some years ago I taught it to a man at Terracina, who was even more delighted with the lesson than my pupil of to-day. I don’t think the people in this country trouble themselves much with trapping birds ; whereas in Italy no bird can put his foot down without the chance of finding himself fast by the leg in a horse-hair noose. My astonishment, when in Italy, was to see so many birds ; for what with nets, nooses, and bird-lime, it is quite marvellous that any escape. But here we are, and what a crowd !”

Sure enough, when they reached the house, half the

village was standing in front of the door. The news of Matilde's good fortune was known.

As they came forward a lane was opened for the two friends to pass. All hats were off, and when they had entered the house, the murmur of voices and the clapping of hands resounded : they seldom cheer in France.

"Good, good!" said the Marquis ; "quite punctual, and they are ready to serve ; but we must send the good people away, for the most succulent meats cease to be nourishing if one is disturbed while eating."

He stepped to the door, bowed profoundly to the crowd, repeating exactly the same sentiment.

"My brave people," he said, "the gentlemen whose conduct you are pleased to admire are going to breakfast. The best of food is no longer nutritious if it is not eaten in tranquillity ; this is a point of consequence ; be considerate ; be French ; and retire till they have finished their meal."

The matter of eating is a serious affair in France. The Marquis's statement was of great force with his auditors, for they immediately dispersed, and the two Englishmen obeyed the call of the successful orator by placing themselves at table.

CHAPTER VII.

STONEWALL FISHING.

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A FRENCH breakfast was new to Hope. Cross was quite at home, for he had partaken of many: the first of these, therefore, only remarked that the table had no tablecloth, but otherwise that it was spread much as it had been for the late dinner of the night before. In the centre stood various fruits: there was no melon, but the apricots, plums, and pears were exactly the same. There were also piles of prawns and crabs dressed cold, as Cross had described them. In addition to all this, there were rolls, slices of bread and toast, and a large lump of butter. The toast attracted Cross's notice, and he complimented the Marquis on his attention in having ordered it.

"You see," said the Marquis, "that I understand the English taste. I know you cannot breakfast without your roasted bread, so I ordered it. For myself, I never inconvenience myself by eating it. It is dry food, and requires a great deal to make it tolerable. But here are our oysters."

Half a dozen, ready opened, were offered to each person, and Hope bolted his nearly as fast as the Marquis. He had determined to follow the lead of so able a guide, at all events as far as he was able. A plateful of eggs followed the oysters. The Marquis took two ; Hope contented himself with one. This was washed down with a little claret, largely diluted with water, and then a dish of côtelettes was handed round. The same proportions were continued by the two Englishmen ; that is to say, they helped themselves to one côtelette, the Frenchman to two. In the next dish were the sand-eels, fried according to the rules so clearly laid down by the Marquis, and of these Hope ate quite as many as his leader—indeed so amply, that when two roast chickens were put on the table, he could only venture on a very moderate portion, as he kept a small corner of his appetite for the crabs and prawns. These followed the chickens ; then came a dish of fried potatoes, and after them two pots of preserves. Of all these the Marquis ate, helping himself to several spoonsful of the preserve, which he swallowed without bread. Some excellent bottled cider was produced, and drunk after the sweets ; then the fruit and white wine, a sort of vin de Grave ; and the breakfast at last concluded with coffee, and the usual glass of brandy. Hope found that breakfast was a

matter of business, not of necessity. There was no hurry ; everything was done deliberately, with a short pause between each dish, which pause was invariably filled up by a few remarks made by the Marquis on the merits of the last plat. He was eloquent in praise of the côte-lettes ; they were made out of the same little sheep whose leg had graced the table on the night before, and the Marquis enlarged on the merit of feeding sheep on salt marshes, adducing in proof the present côte-lettes as an example. The eels also were praised, but the chickens were not so tender as they ought to have been. Altogether, however, his meal seemed to please him ; and when he had concluded, and they rose from their long sitting, he declared that a man might contrive to live for a short time in a fishing village in Normandy, as the sea air was excellent for the appetite ; and, for the sake of obtaining one for his dinner, he should forthwith go and catch a few prawns.

Hope was anxious to see the remaining modes of fishing, so, when the Marquis went off to get his net, he started with Cross for the sands.

“ This sort of morning dinner may be very well now and then,” said Hope, “ but it would bore me to death if it took place every day. It is such an endless affair ; so many things, and such a long pause between each dish,

with notes and annotations on them by the Marquis by way of sauce ; why, we were an hour and a quarter at table, and I could have eaten all I wanted comfortably in a fifth part of the time."

"I don't doubt it," answered Cross ; "and an American would do it in half the time you could ; but if you consulted the Marquis on this subject, he would tell you that you do ill, and the American worse. The French gourmand eats slowly on principle, and they are not so far wrong ; for, by thus taking their time over their meals, they never feel uncomfortable, in spite of the quantity they eat. For instance, if the Marquis had put his huge breakfast into his stomach in ten or fifteen minutes, do you think he could have started off at the rate of four miles an hour, as he did just now ? Or, to come nearer home, could you breast this hill, at the pace we are now going, without being blown ?"

"Very likely not," said Hope ; "but to tell you the truth, I still persist in thinking our arrangement the best, for I prefer being obliged to walk a little slower at first starting to being bored for an hour longer than is necessary in eating my breakfast ; and, since I have begun finding fault, there are two things that go strangely against the grain with me in the table arrangements of a people who consider themselves the

most refined nation on the earth. First, having no table-cloth at breakfast, and this not from any want of linen, for I see that all the women here make as much fuss about having a large stock of that article as the old ladies do in Scotland. The want of a table-cloth at breakfast is a custom, and a very nasty one ; and, what is still worse, never changing your fork—meat or fish, you must always keep your fork, which is never changed till they begin eating sweet things. I own I think this abominable.”

“I agree with you,” said Cross, “that having no table-cloth is not a nice custom, but every country has its own ways ; as for not changing the forks, it is in fact a piece of refinement on their part, and, in conjunction with their dinners, could hardly be avoided. They have always a great many more dishes than we have, a guest is expected to taste them all, the people are not rich enough to have two dozen silver forks for every one at table, and, as they like to eat with a silver fork, it is much better to have your own than to give you that of another person wiped or washed, which must be done if forks were changed with every fresh dish that is handed round and of which you are expected to eat.”

“There is reason in what you say,” answered Hope, laughing ; “and I confess myself to be a little John

Bullish in growling because everything is not exactly as we see it in England, where we are now growing very pampered and apt to give ourselves airs, although it is not so very long since our fine ladies brought their own knives to dinner and ate with their fingers."

Thus talking they reached the steep path leading to the sea. At the top they met their landlord, who was in great delight; he had made a number of traps, and two more birds had been caught. He was there, waiting to beg them not to tell the secret to any one else, for he considered the knowledge such a treasure that he did not wish to share it with any one.

Hope made no answer to his request, but congratulated him on his success. "Hang the fellow!" he said, when he was half down the hill; "I am sorry I taught him, since he is so selfish."

"Phoo, nonsense," said Cross; "he is not worse than his neighbours. He keeps the inn and has to provide for our friend the Marquis and such like, so to him the lesson is invaluable, while to others it is only the price they can get for what they catch; and, if all of them took to trapping, they would soon clear the coast. But here is Matilde's mother; she is waiting for us apparently."

She was so, for as soon as they approached her she

joined them. She had on her shoulder one of the lesser prawn-nets with the cross poles.

"I am waiting for you," she said, "and you are just in time; it is my day for the fishing. Matilde told me you wished to see how we take the fish, so I sent her on, and waited to have the pleasure of shewing you myself."

"A thousand thanks," said Hope; "I do wish to see it, and may I ask what you mean by your day at the fishing?"

"The fishery," answered Madame le Moine, for that was the old lady's name; "the fishery was made a great many years ago, and my father and his father before him had the right to fish it. When my father died my sister's husband and mine had some words about the right (they are both dead now—Heaven rest their souls), but from words they came to blows, and it might have been serious if my sister and myself had not arrived in the nick of time. We soon settled them, the foolish fellows, and sent them home to wait till we came; and then my sister and I arranged that we should have the fishing every other day and pay between us the expense of retaining the walls when the sea makes them fall; and there has never been a word of dispute since. Yesterday was her day and to-day is mine; to-morrow it will be hers again, so this tide she has two good days,

but next tide, perhaps, I shall have the two best days, and she only one, so the arrangement is very fair, and we are quite satisfied."

"But does no one else dispute the right with you?" asked Cross.

"A year ago, some people did dispute our right, and one of them went and fished the fishery in spite of us; but we took her before the Juge de Paix, and proved that we had always built up the walls every spring, and that our fathers had done so before us; so the trespasser was fined, and no one has troubled us since."

"Is yours the only fishery?" asked Hope.

"Oh no, there are a great many more along the coast."

"And are they considered property too?"

"Yes, all of them; and since my dispute was settled, no one has interfered with any of those proprietors, who are known to have held the right of fishing from their fathers."

"Lucky for them," said Cross, "that Barbès and Raspail did not get their way, or there would have been a general partition at sea, as well as on land."

"Are these fisheries very productive?" asked Hope.

"Sometimes they are very good; but that is not often. I have had some excellent days; once I got six

large carts full of herrings, and last year I caught two of great mackerel ; but often we get very little. When the spring tides come, however, we always find something which helps to buy us bread when the tides are small, for then we cannot fish."

"Do you know," again asked Hope, "how long these fisheries have been made, or who invented them?"

"Oh no, we do not know when they were made ; but some of them are older than others, and I have heard my father say that they were here when a people they call Romans and the French used to fight."

Thus discussing the antiquity of the fisheries, they advanced towards the one they were going to see. It was a very rude structure, being merely a long semicircular line of stones heaped on the sand, and stretching from one mass of rock to another ; this wall, or rather mound of stones, was about four feet high at the ends nearest the shore, gradually increasing both in height and breadth as it reached the centre ; there it was ten feet high, and about six feet broad on the top. The inside was built nearly perpendicular ; the outside had a long slope, for the mound was nearly twenty feet broad at the bottom. On the inside there was something like regularity in the building ; but the outside was merely composed of large blocks of stone tumbled carelessly together.

Along the outside line there were apparently lumps of rocks rising from the sand and abutting against the structure; these, however, proved, when examined, to be only masses of spongy-looking substance formed by the same insect that had built on the rocks. Some of these masses had been broken in repairing the fishery, in different places; they were fully five feet thick, measuring from the sand, thereby shewing that these insects must either work very fast, or that the fishery must be very old. Nearly in the centre there was an opening in the curved line of the building; and on either side of this opening, a better built wall projected about ten yards towards the sea. The space between these walls was rather more than four feet wide. At the end next the sea a strong wooden frame was erected, and in the frame was fixed a sluice very neatly, but strongly made of wicker-work. When the party reached the end of the mound nearest the land, they were obliged to mount on the top of it and walk along its uneven and yet slippery surface, towards the sluice, or killing-place. It was not an easy job, for the stones were all covered with short sea-ware of various sorts, but among these laver greatly preponderated. Any one who has ever tried to walk on rocks where laver grows will at once understand that there was some difficulty in progressing fully three hundred yards along

a mound of loose stones, covered with this and other such marine herbs, but difficult as it was, they preferred this road to wading through the water. Hope did not like remaining the whole day wet, and the top of the dyke was the only dry road; for, within the building, the sea was dammed up, and looked like a very large pond; while, on the outside, the water was escaping through the apertures between the stones, spouting out in every direction, and running in rills towards the retiring sea. They did not hurry themselves, for the old lady, when she saw the state of the tide, had told them that nothing could be done for a quarter of an hour; they moved, therefore, gently along, picking their steps and pausing occasionally to look at the heaps of shells, and cuttle-fish bones, that lay scattered along the outside of their path. When they had nearly reached the end of their journey, they saw a large shoal of small fish dash out of the water, which was as clear as crystal, and about five feet deep. When their attention was drawn by the splash which the fish made in dashing out of the water, they looked at the spot and saw that it appeared bright green, from the shoal of little fish that were crowding together.

“We shall get something to-day,” said Madame le Moine; “these must have been mackerel that were chasing the sardines.”

Close to the edge, and on one side of the sluice, sat little Matilde; her friend Angela was on the other; by Angela sat the same young man who had carried one of the lanterns the night before. Angela held in her hand a net like Madame le Moine's; the young man had two short poles, with very strong iron hooks at the end, and close by Matilde lay a small bundle of nets with corks to it.

Madame le Moine called to them, "Have you seen anything to-day?"

"Yes, yes; we shall do well to-day," answered Angela; "there are mackerel, hole-fish (gar-fish), and a great many lançons (sand-eels); they will make poor work with the spade to-day, for the lançons have not taken the sand this tide."

"That is good," said the old lady; "what fortune you good gentlemen bring us; and Frederic is there, I see, so we shall get those wicked beasts that are pulling down the fishery."

"Who is Frederic?" asked Cross.

"He is a good young man, a relation of mine, and he has come to help us to take the two minaur's that are destroying us."

"What is a minaur?" asked Hope.

"You will see him," said Madame le Moine, "when

we pull him out. He is an accursed beast, and there are two of them ; but we cannot get them till the water falls."

"And is Frederic come to help you or Angela?" asked Cross.

The old woman looked at him and laughed. "You have found that out already, have you? Well, young men have sharp eyes when a pretty girl is in the way ;" then lowering her voice, she continued—"you are right ; Frederic is Angela's pretender ; and they were to be married when he came back from Newfoundland this autumn, but this 'maudite' Revolution prevented the fleet from sailing, and they must wait for a year, for they are not rich enough to marry now. Poor things! they gain what gives them bread, but they cannot furnish a house by catching oysters, or working in a trawl-boat ; but they are good and prudent, and they will wait. The fleet will sail in the spring, and then Frederic will gain good wages, for he is to be an officer next voyage ; and in the meantime he is not idle, except when he comes to pay us a visit for a day or two ; and as he was here, I have asked him to come and help us to take these minours and mend the dyke. We are not strong enough to do it ourselves, and as we must pay somebody to assist us, I am glad to choose Frederic, who will not work less hard when Angela is with him."

This little confidence was delivered with great volubility. If a Frenchwoman were a hundred years old, she would always take an interest in love, for when past the age of love herself, there are still the loves of others to engage her attention and sympathy.

The two friends could not help looking at the couple. The young man was a very handsome dark youth, and looked like a smart sailor. He wore a dress like that of our sailors, which shewed his strong, well-made figure to advantage. Angela, as we have already said, was a very handsome girl. She was rather pale in general, but when she saw the eyes of the two friends fixed on her, while Madame le Moine was speaking, she probably suspected what was being told, for her beauty was greatly increased by the bright blush that crossed her face.

“Change the subject, and look another way,” said Hope; “the poor girl hears what the old lady is saying, and it frets her, for she is blushing.”

The small fish helped this intention, for they again made a dash out of the water. This time the friends saw a shoal of larger fish swimming rapidly below the small ones. A part of them seemed to enter the outlet towards the sluice.

“See them; they are mackerel,” said Matilde.

The gentlemen hurried forward; Angela stepped

down on a sort of landing-place ; she held her net by the upper end of the handles, and plunged it in the water, then swept it towards the sluice. As soon as the bottom of the net touched the sluice, she gave the net a shake and raised it. The friends were then quite close, and they could see that she had taken a quantity of fish of some sort, which were springing and glancing in the bag.

The two girls had removed the baskets from their shoulders—they were lying on the stones beside Matilde—to empty the net. Angela held it across the stream ; Matilde took it and, in her turn, held it up to Hope and Cross, that they might see what was taken. They looked, and saw forty or fifty mackerel, about the size of small herrings.”

“What beautiful little fish they are,” said Hope ; “can anything be more brilliant than the striped colours on their backs, contrasted with the silvery white of their bellies !”

“And as they say in the North,” continued Cross, “I will warrant them to be as good as they are bonny. It does not require a French Marquis to make these fellows eatable, as you will allow at dinner to-day.”

“Faith, then, they must be very good, for they are very beautiful,” said Hope. “Just look at the colour ;

how it flashes and changes between emerald green and sapphire blue ! They look more like a mass of precious stones than live fish."

"They are not living," said Cross, "they are dying ; they live a very short time out of the water, and as they die this change of colour takes place. A mackerel is always a pretty fish, but no one can have an idea of their beauty who has not seen them caught ; so many of them together certainly adds to the effect, and I can tell you, these little ones, for eating, are as superior to the full-grown ones as it is possible for anything to be—in no way are they so good as plain boiled in sea water—we must try and get a panful to let you taste them in full perfection. I have a friend at court here, and I will try and get half a gallon of sea water up to our inn."

"Try to get some sea water?" said Hope ; "one would think that you were in the centre of Europe, instead of on the shores of the Atlantic ! what is there to hinder your getting as much as you please ?"

"Why, as I have no taste for picking oakum, or being shut up in Mont St. Michel, or some less picturesque jail, I should not like to be caught carrying sea water myself ; and I should not like to bribe any one else to run the risk."

“What nonsense you talk,” answered Hope ; “sent to jail for carrying sea water !”

“No less,” said Cross ; “don’t you know that the duty on salt is enormous in France ? so high that every art is employed to get hold of it ; amongst others, if they were allowed, every man near the sea would make his own salt, by evaporating the water. To prevent this, all the salt works swarm with excise officers, and the coast has guards and spies in every direction, who are ready to pounce on any one who attempts to carry off a single bottleful.”

“Well, that is oppression !” exclaimed Hope ; “and you really mean to say, that they would not allow you to carry off as much sea water as would boil us a dish of fish ?”

“I told you,” answered Cross, “that I have a friend at court here ; he can say—‘How do you do,’ and ‘god-dam,’ and thinks he can speak English. I have won his friendship by pretending to believe that he can. If he is on guard, and if I pledge my word to throw away the water as soon as our fish is boiled, he will let us have a gallon out of affection for us, who speak the same language that he does ; but if he caught me taking it without leave, or without this promise, his friendship would not prevent his sending us to Granville, under the escort

of half-a-dozen gentlemen with green coats, long muskets, and 'Douanier' cut out on a brass plate on their caps."

"That bangs Banagher!" said Hope; "and if people are governed by such a law as that, I don't wonder that they kick up a row now and then."

"They are coming in now, gentlemen," said Matilde; "if you will sit down you will not frighten them, and there is my petticoat to sit on; I brought two to-day, for it was so cold last night."

"I beg your pardon," said Hope (who took the hint that he was scaring the fish); "but why should we make a cushion of your petticoat, and spoil it?"

"You will not spoil it, so pray use it," said the little girl.

The friends thanked her and sat down.

While they had been talking, the water had not ceased to flow, not only through the sluice, but through the crevices in the dyke; the pond was therefore much reduced in size, and had fallen so much that it was not more than three feet deep. Madame le Moine had crossed the sluice, and had walked for a considerable distance along the dyke on the other side. Angela was standing a little lower than when she made the first sweep; her net was leaning against the side of the wall,

one end resting on a stone, the other she held in her hand.

“Look out ! look out !” called the old woman ; “there is a fine lot of them.”

The friends saw the wave which a body of fish made in moving through the water ; however, they did not enter the narrow neck, but turned along the side of the dyke in the direction in which the party had arrived.

“Run, Matilde,” said Angela ; “turn them.”

Matilde did as she was bid ; putting off her sabots, she ran quickly along the slippery stones, returning slowly, waving her arms in the air.

“Look, Angela,” exclaimed both Cross and Hope at the same moment, for they caught sight below them of the large shoal entering the narrow. On the surface of the water they saw more than a hundred gar-fish dash-
ing on with their shining green backs and long noses, and below them again was visible the glancing of ten times that number of other fish, also pressing forward in the same direction.

Angela remained quite still, leaning back against the wall for a moment ; then she dashed her net into the water, made her sweep, and raised it absolutely full of fish.

“Not bad,” she said ; “there are always some that

get away ; but there were not many this time. Help me, Frederic, for they are very heavy."

Frederic lifted the net and held it up, while Hope and Cross each took a basket and ran to cross the sluice by the wooden frame. When they came up to Frédéric, they found that the net had taken all the gar-fish, and almost the whole of the shoal of mackerel.

"Empty the net, quick," said Angela ; "the rest of the mackerel miss their friends. They have come again, and are rubbing their noses against the sluice."

The net was turned over, leaving the fish to kick their last among the stones, and was given to Angela, who repeated the same sweep she had before made, and this time not one of the remaining mackerel was missed. There were also six or eight very bright gray fish that looked like enormous dace.

"That is a beautiful sight," said Hope, as he again looked at the shining mass of changing colour, "and the mixture of other fish rather adds to their beauty. The gar-fish I know ; but what is the name of that other fish ? it is not a mullet."

"What do you call these ?" asked Cross, pointing to the gray-looking fish, and speaking in French.

"Demoiselles," answered Angela.

"Yes, demoiselles ; I remember," said Cross, "that

is the name they go by here ; but how are they called in the rest of France, or what is their scientific or English name, I cannot tell you. Sometimes they catch great shoals of them when they are about the quarter the size of these. I have seen great quantities of them in the markets early in the year."

"And are they a good fish?" asked Hope.

"Faith, I cannot say, for I have never eaten them ; but these girls can tell you, or, rather, here comes Madame le Moine ; she is an older, and therefore perhaps a better judge."

Hope put the question to the old lady.

"We poor people think them very good ; but those who are rich enough to buy better, do not eat them ; they have too many bones for people who are rich enough to like to eat their dinner without trouble."

"These," she continued, picking up a gar-fish, "are very good indeed ; but I have seen people who even found fault with them as being too dry ; and others again do not like to see their green bones ; some people are so fanciful, and because gar-fish have green bones, they think they must live upon copper."

"Are gar-fish common on this coast?" asked Hope.

"Oh yes," answered Madame le Moine ; "we sometimes get a good many of them, and very large ones ;

but they are much more common on the coast of Brittany."

"I know that," said Cross, "for they catch quantities off St. Malo, and farther down, with a white fly. They fish for them very much in the same manner as they catch seath and lythe on the coasts of Scotland."

"Which is not bad fun," said Hope, "on a summer evening. Have they any of those fish on these coasts?"

"They have lythe, and call them by the same name. I will bet a trifle that we shall find one or two in the nets we are to see presently. But for the family of the stainlochs, I have never seen any of them. It was some time before I knew that stainloch, grey-fish, seath, cud-ding, and poddly, were all one fish at different ages; and, knowing it now, I can tell you that hereabouts I have never seen any of the tribe."

"The water is low enough now," said Madame le Moine. "Now we have got the mackerel, there is no fear of these lançons taking the sand; therefore we may as well drive them. And there are also a good many mullets, which the gentlemen may like to see, so let us put in the net, for they are much too cunning to drive, or to be taken with the hand-net."

Cross and Hope began to move with the rest of the party, but Madame le Moine stopped them.

"Stay where you are," she said; "you will see better here than by moving; and there you will see the place where those maudite minaur's are lying. Just look what a quantity of my wall they have pulled down."

The friends looked where the old woman pointed; they saw several tons of stones lying a yard or two from the main wall, which at that place looked very ruinous and tumble-down.

"You don't mean," said Hope, "that a fish pulled that wall down?"

"I do say so," replied she; "and it is the truth. You shall see what an accursed beast he is, and what strength he has. Do you observe those two yellow marks on the sand? Well, there is one at each of these places, for these are their holes. The one nearest us has the half of my clip in him, that I broke trying to haul him out last spring tide. But Frederic has brought two proper good ones, and a pickaxe, so that, with the help of the Virgin, we will have them out to-day. But first we must clean the fishery, and if you stay, you will see everything; or, if you would like to catch the lançons, you shall have the net when we drive them to the sluice."

Hope and Cross agreed to be guided by the old lady. They sat down on a large stone, while the rest of the

party shouldered the nets, and slid down the dyke into the water. Frederic carried the net with the corks ; Angela and the old woman had each a pole-net ; and little Matilde held one of the poles with the iron hooks, which she called by the same name as the salmon-fisher in Scotland gives to his landing-hook ; namely a clip. The one Matilde carried was exactly of the same form as those used by the northern salmon-fisher, but was six times as strong, looking more like a short boat-hook, without the spike, than a clip. But a clip it was called. Once fairly in the water, the old lady led the way, keeping close to the side of the wall, the others following, till they reached the shallowest part of the water. There they spread out, and walked backwards and forwards, beating the water with the nets and poles. This they continued to do till they had traversed the larger half of the pond, and the water was then nearly up to their knees. Frederic then lowered the net which he carried into the water. It was a trois-mailles, about twenty yards long and light, for though the meshes were very small, it was made of such fine thread that it could not be heavy. Angela took the other end of this net, first giving the pole-net to Matilde, and they walked on, Frederic and Angela drawing the trois-mailles, Madame le Moine and Matilde on either side of them, both strik-

ing the water lightly with the poles of their nets, holding them by the centre, so as to make the whole pole touch the water at once. They came on quickly, till the ends of the trois-maillles touched the dyke on each side of the sluice.

While they were thus advancing, a fish sprang over the net. The moment it did so Angela and Frederic lifted the corks out of the water. A number of other fish sprang, but the net being lifted a foot above the water, they struck against it, and failed in their leap.

"Well done, my children," said Madame le Moine ; "they are safe enough, the cunning rogues ; they are done for !"

The glistening of the fish, and the shaking of the corks, shewed that they were firmly fixed.

"There are some good mullet," said Cross ; "they are well bagged, and they shake the net so much that nothing else will try to run back."

"I thought they were mullet," said Hope, "for I have seen them play the same trick of jumping over the net in Scotland ; the fishermen there call them merry-fish. I have been told that if they miss their first spring they never try it a second time, and to cheat them, Scotch fishermen draw two nets, one after the other, so that if a lot get over the first net they are sure

to have them in the second. They are very numerous in the muddy bays all round Britain. I have seen some very good hauls taken myself, and a friend of mine told me he had assisted in the taking upwards of fourteen hundred at one sweep of a net."

"In the south of France," said Cross, "they would have liked such a haul ; for there they boil them down to make the soup of a sort of water zoutchee, which they call bouillabaise ; but for myself, a little of them goes a long way. Even when dressed en fillet, with a rich sauce, by as good a cook as our friend the Marquis, they have always a sort of leathery texture which I do not like ; but some people are very fond of them."

"Water zoutchee is a very good thing," said Hope. "I would like very well to taste their bouillabaise, to see if a Frenchman can improve on a Dutch dish."

"Well, it is not unlikely that you may do so to-day, for it is a favourite dish of the Marquis, and I saw all the soles and the rest of the fish we sent home yesterday, in the act of going into a pot-au-feu, with sundry bundles of herbs. This, I am sure, is destined to be converted either into white-fish soup or bouillabaise."

"Are the lançons at the sluice?" asked Madame le Moine.

Cross and Hope had been watching the people, and

had not looked towards the sluice for some time ; but on hearing this question they turned their eyes in that direction, and saw hundreds of little fish with their heads against the wicker-work, and a great many more dashing up and down in the narrow space between the walls. They answered the question by describing what they saw.

“Take my net, then,” said the old lady ; and stepping across the trois-mailles, she handed it up to Hope, who took it, and stepped down on to the slope where Angela had stood when she took the mackerel.

He grasped the ends as he had seen her do, plunged it into the water, and tried to sweep it round as she had done, but, he found that it was not such an easy job. The net twisted to one side as he was trying to give it the true scientific shake, and when he lifted it there were only three sand-eels in the bag.

“Confound the thing !” he said ; “that girl must be as strong as a horse, for she moved the net with all the ease and grace of an opera dancer, and here I have used all my strength and knocked the skin off three of my knuckles, and after all have only got a fish in exchange for each sample of my skin that I have left on these wretched stones.”

· The misfortunes of our friends, says the French

cynic, are always pleasing to us. Being in France, Cross seemed to agree with the sentiment, for he only laughed at Hope's misfortune. "Let me try," he said; "it is knack, and not strength, that is required."

Hope gave him the net, and mounted again on to the top of the dyke, where he employed himself in comforting his bleeding fingers.

Cross took the net and the place which Hope had resigned; he got up the attitude, and tried to imitate Angela's graceful sweep; but the result was almost as great a failure as Hope's, for when he raised the net, he had only caught five. It was Hope's turn to laugh, and he did so, and when Cross turned to the party, who were beating the water beside the net, he had the mortification to see that they too were enjoying a comfortable laugh.

"Everything requires practice," said Madame le Moine; "you cannot expect to learn a trade in a minute. Have the goodness," she said, addressing herself to Hope, "to give me the net; I will shew you the safe way for old women and beginners; but you cannot do it without getting wet."

Hope gave her the net; she held it by the centre, and laid the length of the pole gently on the water, walking slowly towards the narrows. The friends watched

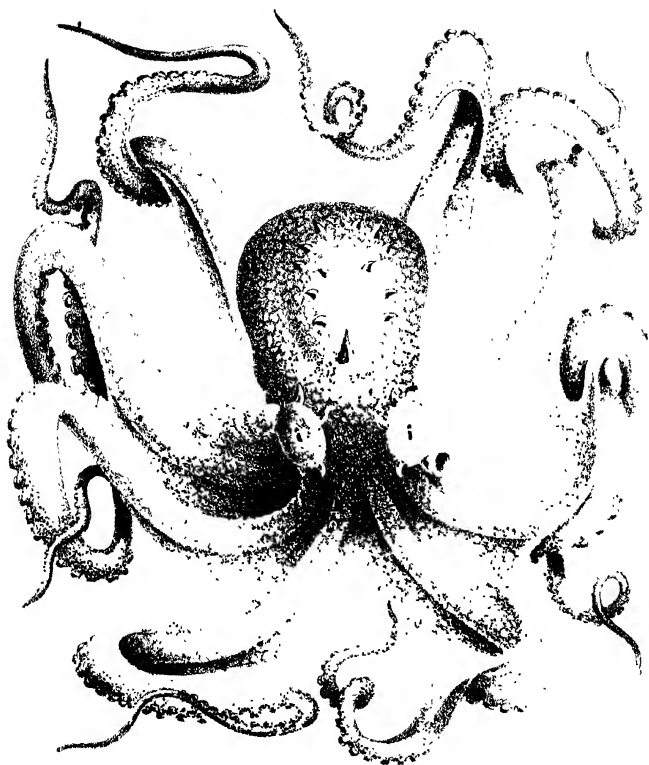
the water ; first came the whole lot of sand-eels rushing against the sluice, and then behind them the water was perfectly green, from the colour of the backs of thousands of the little fish they had first seen, and which they had heard called sardines.

Once within the narrow space between the two walls, the old lady turned the net and walked on with it, pushing it before her, as if she was fishing for prawns ; when she reached the end, she gave the same scientific shake, and raised it filled with almost the whole of the shoals of both sand-eels and sardines.

“ Well done, madame ! ” exclaimed Hope, as he stooped to look at this fish.

“ Yes, we have done very well to-day,” said the old dame, “ and you have brought us our good fortune, so, thanks to Our Lady and you, we shall not want for many a day. Come on, my children, let us make an end, and then we have only to settle matters with those ugly minnaurs.”

Angela and Frederic drew the net on, till the two ends met ; they then kicked the bottom line into a bunch with their feet, then gathered the corks with their hands, and lifted up the whole in a mass to Madame le Moine and Matilde, who had scrambled on to the top of the wall to receive it. There were eight mullet, three or four



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OCTOPUS VULGARIS

EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS

more desmoiselles, one little brill, and several small soles, and brown-backed flounders.

"I am surprised," said Hope, "not to see more of the small soles, since they catch so many of them with the prawn nets;" this remark was made in French to the old lady.

"It is not surprising," she replied, "if you consider where this fishery is; flat fish hardly ever go on the rocks, and never cross the walls. All we get here, therefore, are only those which go near the shore, and forget their way back again when the tide turns. If they are inside the rocks, they come straight out and we get them; but in general, they follow the great stream, which runs round, and not over the rocks. There are some fisheries beyond Granville, that are built on the open sand, with no rocks near, and in them they catch a great many, and very fine flat fish; but they do not get as many mackerel or herrings as we do."

"And these," said Hope, holding up a handful of the little fish that had just been caught; "you call these sardines? are they the same as they catch in Italy, under that name, or are they only young herrings?"

"I don't know anything about it," answered the old woman; "we always call them sardines."

“Do you know, Cross?” asked Hope, speaking in English.

“No, I do not,” replied Cross, “for I never saw sardines before, except salted. I am no great naturalist ; what little I know, I have learnt more from observation than teaching, but I think these fish are full grown, for the females have roes. I have also seen them cured, and they were quite as good as any Sicilian sardines ; and if we can only persuade our landlady to clean them, you shall try how they eat fresh. I will take home a basket of them and salt them slightly, to use for spinning for perch in the Mare de Boulion. I had capital sport there with them once, and got some splendid perch.”

“And I,” said Hope, “cannot tell either what they are. I have seen and eaten thousands of sardines, both salt and fresh ; but when I was in Italy I thought more of fun and dancing than of natural history ; it is pretty certain that these are full of roe, but I doubt much if that be any rule to mark the difference between young and full-grown fish, for I have seen trout caught to stock a lake, which were not longer than my finger when they were turned in, yet were quite full of spawn. I fished the same lake a few years after and caught these trout there, weighing three pounds apiece. I am sure they

were the same fish as those that were turned in, for none others were ever put there, yet these fish which had grown to such a size were full of roe when they were not longer than my finger."

"That may be true enough," said Cross, "for the growth of fish is little known or understood; I have seen trout turned into a large piece of artificial water which were caught in a stream not far from it; in that stream (and I have fished it for miles) I never saw a trout that would weigh four ounces, and yet in the artificial pond I have caught them myself as large as those you mention. I made most particular inquiries, and can therefore say with confidence that every trout in the artificial water came from the stream where they were always small."

While the friends were thus discussing the sardines, the girls and Frederic had been arranging the fish in the baskets and clearing the nets; the trois-maillles were laid on the stones to dry, and the pole-nets were stuck up, so as to let the wind blow through them. Angela and Madame le Moine each took one of the clips, Frederic took the pickaxe, and the whole party slid again into the water. Cross and Hope went to the place on the dyke, nearest to the spot that had been shewn them as holding the minauris.

Frederic began first by scraping a considerable hole in the sand with the pickaxe : he then took one of the clips, thrust it into the hole, and gave it a violent jerk ; it was drawn deeper into the sand after this jerk.

“That’s into him !” he exclaimed, and he gave the end of the clip into Madame le Moine’s hand ; little Matilde took hold of it also.

Frederic then took the other clip from Angela, and did the same with it as he had done with the first, returning the staff to Angela, when he felt that it was fast.

“Now haul away,” he cried.

The three women pulled with all their force ; something white was seen, and then the water became black.

Frederic put down his pickaxe, and jerked violently ; something like a large eel appeared above the water, and Frederic nearly fell back from the force of his jerk.

“There is one of his arms,” he said ; and he gave another blow with his pickaxe. After a number of jerks another arm shewed above the water.

“Pull steady and let the water clear a little,” said Frederic ; and he put out his hand to help Angela. The water running rapidly towards the sluice soon became clear. Hope and Cross, as they looked down from the

more elevated station where they were standing, soon saw the state of matters below ; they could distinguish two white substances that were twisting in the water like two large eels ; several more could be partially seen half hid under the sand or large stones. The clips were fastened in a bag that looked like a man's cotton night-cap, for it was much the same shape, size, and colour. The colour, though white, was semi-transparent, and shone more brightly than a cotton night-cap would have done. It was evident that the eel-looking branches which sprung from this bag were firmly fixed to the stones under which they were hid, for many of the stones had been moved from their places by the strain which the party were giving to the clips. When the water became clear, Frederic hooked his pickaxe into one of the half hid branches, renewed the jerks he had given to the other two with the same success, for after shaking one of the large stones violently, something seemed to give way, and another arm was twisting in the water. The like process was repeated several times, always with the same result ; at last, bag, arms, and all appeared above the water, falling down into a lump ; one arm only remained below water, and that was fixed to a stone of about two or three hundred-weight, which, in spite of its size, was dragged out of its bed in the sand by the united strength

of the old woman and the two girls. Frederic hooked his pickaxe round this remaining arm, gave the usual jerks, it gave way, and a long mass of nasty-looking stuff was lifted in the air.

“Well done!” said Madame le Moine; “the ugly beast, we have settled him. He will pull down no more of the fishery nor swallow any more of my fish. Hook the other, Frederic, while I put this one beside these gentlemen.”

Saying this, one of the clips was unhooked from the creature and given to Frederic, and the old woman clambered up the dyke, holding the other in her hand, fast fixed in the fish; when she was fairly up, she threw her burden with force on the stones and withdrew the clip. “Is he not an ugly beast?” she said, addressing the two friends.

“He is indeed,” said Hope, who now could see it in all its deformity. It looked like an enormous cuttle-fish. It had the same form—the bag-looking body, the two huge eyes, and the bunch of feelers springing from them; these feelers, however, were far larger and longer than those of any cuttle-fish he had ever seen before; they were fully as long as a man’s arm, and were covered on one side, from one end to the other, with lumps rather bigger than a hazel-nut. As they examined it, and began

to stretch out these feelers to look at his size when spread out, they observed a strong muscular action in them all, and the lumps began to open and shut like so many mouths—opening to the size of a shilling, and then again contracting till they looked like warts.

“How disgustingly ugly and revolting it is!” said Hope; “and if all those mouths eat, I don’t wonder the old lady is glad to get him out of her fishery. How would you like, Cross, to have that brute clinging round you, sucking you in with all those leech-looking mouths?”

“I don’t believe they eat with those beastly-looking valves,” said Cross; “they use them for clinging to the stones, or perhaps for grasping their prey; but we will ask the old lady.”

They put the question, and she confirmed what Cross had said.—“Yes,” she answered, “they fasten themselves on the stones, and tremendous strength they must have, to be able to draw those large stones out of this wall, with such a weight resting above; you may suppose, when you saw how firmly they grasp, that no fish could get away, if once seized hold of by them.”

“And do they eat fish?” asked Hope.

“Nothing comes amiss to them; they would eat a man if he came in their way. I have seen oysters, shells

and all, in them ; and in one, I found a large crab : oh, they are awful brutes ; I hate the sight of them."

"Perhaps they are not strictly pretty," said Cross ; "but they are interesting, as people say of young ladies. One fine calm sunny day I organized a minaur-hunt with a fisher-girl at Granville, and we started when the tide ebbed, armed with crook and knife. After a scramble over the rocks, and a long search, my guide pointed to a small pile of empty limpets, and freshly broken crab shells and claws, at the bottom of a shallow rock pool which glittered in the sun, with an endless play of bright colours, but was unusually bare of living creatures. 'Behold, the minaur is here,' she said ; and forthwith began to beat the cover, while I looked out for the game. The girl poked about with her crook under the sea-weed, at the deepest side of the pool, in the shadow of a bit of rock ; but I observed that she kept her feet out of the water. Presently she cried out — 'There are two ;' and out they came, sailing over the bright shell sand at the bottom, where I could see them as plainly as I see you. They looked like two small haggis-bags with the strings loose, or a couple of animated turnips, darting root foremost through the water ; but they were complete, active, living creatures of sound understanding, in spite of their looks. Each

squirted a small black cloud of sepia towards the danger, and then swam rapidly away from it behind the screen, jerking backwards by filling the bag with water and squeezing it out again. The pool was small, speed was of no avail, and they seemed to know it ; for they stopped suddenly near the shallow edge and disappeared. First the bag sat down and shrunk up, and then the long arms, which had trailed after it while swimming, spread out like a branching star, ploughed up the sand, dragged in stones and shells, buried the bag, and then having stuck themselves all over with loose rubbish, by means of these glands, the arms too wriggled out of sight, and nothing remained above ground but the open mouth of the bag, and bright eyes looking keenly up at the foe. The bulb had taken root, but it was watching, not vegetating ; for any sudden movement of ours was followed by a start, or some slight quiver amongst the shells as the creature shrunk deeper into his hole. My bare-footed mermaiden stirred them up with her crook, and we watched them for a long time, till I came to the conclusion that they were very sagacious fierce little monsters, well able to take care of themselves, enormously strong, and with great appetites. If any big fish had pursued at first, he could hardly have got through the cloud till the cuttle had planted himself firmly ; and

then he was more than a match for anything of his own size.

“At last we put them into an earthen jar, for I wanted to keep them alive, but they would not be quiet. They kicked, and twined, and struggled ; the long arms were thrust out like an elephant’s trunk from his cage, and curled about, and stuck to everything within reach ; and so the arms dragged the bag out and dropped it with a flop upon the rock so often, that, in despair, I condemned my pets to death. They were executed on the spot, with a rusty knife, by the girl. I have often thought of their rigid, powerful, cold, sticky, clinging grasp upon my hand—especially when swimming near these rocks—and the thought was unpleasant, I can assure you.

“The fisher-girls dread them, and no wonder. As we walked home my companion told me that her hand was once grasped and held tight by a large minaur, when she was groping in a hole for crabs. The tide was rising, and she could neither free her arm nor drag the cuttle from his fortress. She had no weapons ; he was too tough to break by a steady pull, and he held on. She thought her last hour was come, and screamed for help. Fortunately a fisherman was within hail, who came to her and slew the brute ; but she had a very narrow escape, for the water was up to her waist before she got free.”

"I have heard a similar story about a Highlander and a lobster," said Hope.

"The Granville story is true," said Cross, "for I took the trouble to ask the fish-wives about it, and they confirmed the girl's account of the matter; and the lobster story may be true also. I wonder," he added, with a sly look, "what the author of the 'Vestiges,' would say about a minaur. Perhaps he might argue that the first of the race was an uprooted bulb, washed into the sea; and that our friend the Marquis was 'developed' from this type. Both are muscular provision bags, armed with organs for filling them, and wit to use the means provided. The minaur was strongly attached to Marie, when he sought her hand, and his thoughts must be in his inside, for all the head he has is there."

"Stuff and nonsense," said Hope. "Men alone are cooks, and the Marquis is a distinguished cook and a man; one of the Breton branch of the old Macadam family. The minaur is of still older descent than he, and can point to the tombs of his ancestors amongst the old Welsh rocks; but we have nothing to do with such speculations at present."

"Does anybody eat minaur, Madame?" he added in French.

"Yes," she answered; "in the spring they are some-

times eaten; but then they take more hammering and cooking than they are worth: but at this season they are so hard, that if you hammered them for one half the day, and stewed them for the other half, they would still eat like a mouthful of fiddle-strings: but if you get them down, they tell me they are very nourishing, and that they are wonderful restorers of old men, who have been rakes in their youth. They are a good bait for catching big cod, and they have one great advantage: if you once get the bait on to a hook, no fish can get it off again, so that one bait will last for a week."

"Just what I told you," said Cross, turning to Hope; "and it is a great pity that they do not salt them down for this purpose. I will have a talk to Frederic about it, as soon as they have hauled out the other."

The same process was pursued in taking the second monster as the first; it was smaller, however, and did not give so much trouble. When fairly landed beside its companion on the dyke, Cross desired the old lady to leave a number of the mackerel and sardines at the inn, and, strange to say, he had considerable trouble in persuading her to receive payment for them. He then asked Frederic to go with them, to shew them where the nets and lines of their yesterday's acquaintance were set, and they proceeded at a rapid pace across the sand,

in the direction to which he pointed. As they walked, Cross spoke to him on the subject of salting minnows and cuttle-fish.

Frederic was an intelligent fellow. He seemed to think that this idea might prove of value to his countrymen, for if there were any demand, a great many might be taken in a year. But he said that he had not thought on the subject, as he never had anything to do with catching the fish he brought back to France, their trade being merely that of buying them in the country and bringing them home. But in the course of their conversation he mentioned a circumstance which interested his hearers. He told them that he had once seen one of these creatures four times larger than the one they had taken that day; that when he found this fish lying on the shore he was walking with a Norwegian sailor, who had then told him that large as that one was, he had seen one far larger on the coast of Norway—the feelers were nine feet long and as thick as his leg; and that he again had heard from his father that there were monsters of the same sort in the sea that grasped ships and took them under water;—in short, that minnows and krakens were the same fish, only that on the coast of France they never came to their full growth as they did on the coast of Norway.

As they walked fast, they were not long in coming up to the party they had agreed to meet. They found the old man, his two sons, and his wife, standing by the side of a very long net ; it was shallow, and was lying with the corks towards the sea, firmly anchored to the sand by the bottom line. We have been so uncourteous as to mention the lady last, but, like the chief personage in a state procession, she soon shewed that she, at all events, considered herself the leader.

“Here you are at last,” she exclaimed ; “I was almost afraid you had forgotten to come. My husband talked of emptying the net and not waiting ; but I gave it to him. I sent him and the boys to bait the lines and clean the other nets, but this one I have kept for you to look at, because it has done very well ; indeed altogether it has been a great tide, and I am glad of it, for you will see what our nets can do, and taste our best fish. It is not often we get so many ; the tre-mailles (trois-mailles) has done wonders, just look at it.

The two friends saw numbers of white specks and lumps along the line of the net, but they were so much rolled up they could not distinguish what they were ; but they now followed in the wake of the old lady, who assumed her character of commanding officer, issuing her orders, which were promptly and quietly obeyed.

The husband and eldest son took their places, one at the cork, the other at the bottom line. The sand was perfectly smooth below the net, shewing no mark of the holes that had been dug to sink the straw anchors beneath it. The action of the water had made them quite flat ; all that could be seen was about an inch of cord, holding the bottom of the net firmly in its place. The father and son moved along, sorting the middle fine-meshed net and smoothing it between the two outer nets, or walls. When they found the net all the corks were towards the sea, being so drawn by the ebbing tide ; this was carefully reversed, the corks being laid towards the shore ; and the reason of this proceeding was explained by saying that it was done to prevent any chance of the nets being entangled when the sudden rush of the tide came on ; for then the corks would be carried before it till the straw holders held them, and in passing over the net the corks might catch and so entangle it. As the two fishermen moved along they came to the specks and lumps that had been seen from the end. There were fish of all sorts and sizes ; every fish, whether large or small, had made a bag for itself by drawing a portion of the fine middle net through one of the large meshes in either of the outside walls. We say either, for it was quite evident that the fish

had been caught in coming towards the shore, as well as in returning—which fact was easily seen by observing that they had made bags on both sides of the net. Hope was astonished to find the variety of fish that one net had taken, and Cross was still more so, for he had often seen the nets drawn before, and never with such good success. There were two sorts of skate, the common skate and the thorn-back, some very large gar-fish, a few very fine mackerel, a quantity of soles, some of which were large, two or three demoiselles, one turbot, not large, but very thick and firm, five or six very fine brills, and a number of plaice and flounders.

In the net these were all, but the lines had caught a great number of skate ; no difference was made in the varieties ; all were called raés. They had three bass, some conger eels, and two lythe that would weigh about seven pounds each. Hope was glad to see these, for he at once knew them to be the same fish which are caught in such quantities on the coasts of Scotland, where they bear the same name.

“We must have the turbot, and also the large soles, for our bouillabaise,” said Cross ; and he prepared himself for a wrangle with the old lady ; but the price she asked was so very moderate, that he gave it at once. He felt somewhat astonished at such un-

wonted moderation, and his surprise was expressed in his face.

"I could not ask you more than they were worth," said she, laughing, as she looked at Cross. "I heard what good gentlemen you are, and how generous you have been to little Matilde. If I were not so poor, I wished to give them to you ; but, with these boys and my husband, whom I must feed and clothe, I cannot afford to give my fish for nothing ; but I have done next thing to it, for I have sold them for the same price that Marie de Coutance would pay for them."

"I thank you," said Cross ; "and as we kept you waiting so long, you must take a franc apiece from my friend and me, to drink little Matilde's health."

She made a most graceful curtsey, and rolled her money in the corner of her handkerchief, promising to lose no time in sending the fish to the inn ; and we may as well mention now, that when the friends arrived there, they found not only the fish they had paid for, but also the large mackerel and gar-fish ; so generosity breeds after its kind.

"The tide has turned," said the lady, "so we must not lose time ; Frederic, you must help to carry home our fish, for the raés are too heavy for the boy."

Frederic was breaking in for a Granville husband,

or he was very good-natured, for he at once obeyed the imperious order, and, shouldering the heavy basket, they all took their way for the shore.

We cannot say that Hope was exactly frightened, but there was undoubtedly a certain uncomfortable remembrance of the night before that made him feel rather unwilling to take a longer line than that chosen by the fishers ; and when Cross explained that he wished to go to the rocky point to try and get permission to have some salt water, Hope agreed, though he certainly stepped out faster than he had ever before done in walking on the sand.

All the fishers were wending their way for the same end, and among the number they did not particularly remark two who were walking slowly before them ; but, on overtaking them, they discovered that one was the Marquis, the other his confederate prawn-fisher. Dressed like all the other fishermen, with their baskets on their backs, they had not distinguished them from the rest, for the Marquis did not wear his straw hat, and the gold band on the captain's cap had not caught their attention ; but when they came in a line with them, they at once recognised the features of the one and the moustaches of the other.

The Marquis was in very bad humour, for he had

had bad sport ; and the Baron's net, near the rocks, had been more successful than his had been on the open sand. The same efflux of tide that had prevented the lançons from taking the sand, had swept the prawns out to sea from the open shore, and very few had been caught, except close under the shelter of the rocks. He must, therefore, eat prawns that had been twenty-four hours out of the water, added to the fact that the Baron had bragged awfully, these misfortunes had made him very sulky ; but his good humour returned when he heard the excellent provision that had been made for dinner ; and at the mention of the bouillabaise, he was again all smiles, and declared the willing pleasure he should have in taking care that the turbot should be properly cooked, and the soles converted into one of his favourite dishes.

"I have brought my friend," he said, as he stepped out before them, "who knows what is good, and he will make our fourth for a rubber this evening."

"Hang the fellow !" whispered Hope. "I hate playing cards all night ; and I suppose these two Frenchmen mean to rook us."

"We must be good-natured," replied Cross, in the same low tone. "The Marquis is wretched without his cards at night, and if they do win it is only paying him for his services, which are well worth all it will cost us

should we lose every game. Since the Revolution they play for very low stakes—the question now being whether the points are five-and-twenty or fifty.”

“Five-and-twenty francs!” said Hope; “that is a pound! they will not catch me playing for such high stakes.”

“Who said it was francs, my dear fellow?—five-and-twenty or fifty centimes, I ought to have said—two-pence halfpenny or fivepence—that is all you will be asked to risk. So you may save your virtuous indignation against gambling for a future occasion.”

“If that is all, I do not mind boring myself for an hour or two by playing cards, if it will amuse our good-natured French friend.”

The latter part of this conversation took place while they were crossing the rocky point where they had first seen little Matilde fall into the water in catching her spider crab; they were then close under the extreme point, where the rocks rose more perpendicularly. Hope was rather startled by hearing a voice call out close above them—

“Who goes there? How you do? stand fast! god-dam!”

“O sir, there you are, speaking English as well as ever,” said Cross, in French; “I was just looking for you.”

“Oh yes, very good!” replied the voice; and then, being at the end of his English, he resumed his native tongue, declaring himself delighted to see Cross.

Hope was duly presented, and then Cross mentioned his wish for permission to have some sea water to boil some fish, as his friend was a great gourmand.

The promise was exacted that the water should be thrown away after the fish were cooked; and then the man in authority promised to send one of his men with a greybeard of salt water. After a proper exchange of thanks and compliments, Hope and Cross took their way up a steep path in the rocks, and the Douanier returned to a sort of hole where he had been sitting. Against the back of this hole rested a musket; the bottom had an armful or two of straw spread over it.

“That must be cold quarters on a winter night,” said Hope, “if they have to stay there to look after sea water at all seasons of the year.”

“Yet so it is,” answered Cross; “winter and summer these poor devils have to watch along the coast; and if some of our Hampshire or Sussex fellows could speak French, I think they would soon give the Government a practical lesson against high duties and bad management. These people are ill-paid; they are on duty for twelve hours at a time, and their share of a seizure is so

small that I am only astonished any duty is ever paid at all on tea, tobacco, salt, gunpowder, needles, earthenware, or English woollen and cotton goods. At home, under such duties and such protection, I suspect a ten-pound note and a dark night would greatly lessen the revenue."

"You talk so *con amore* of smuggling," said Hope, "you seem to have a taste for the pursuit."

"If I were not born a gentleman," said Cross, "I am afraid I might have had a turn that way. There is a sort of romantic danger about it that gives to smuggling the same sort of zest that a keen sportsman must feel in tiger-hunting—that is to say, not in the peddling way of sneaking a pound of tea through the custom-house, by hiding it in your pocket or your trunk. That, in my idea, is like hunting rabbits with a ferret. My fancy would be running cargoes on a wild night on a well-guarded coast ; for that bears more resemblance to hunting tigers—you have the excitement of danger and the triumph of success, which must give the same sort of feeling as winning a battle."

"I am ashamed of you," said Hope ; "I rather suspect the feelings of a smuggler must be more like those of a successful gambler than a victorious general."

"Do you think so ? well, perhaps you are right ;

and I should never make a smuggler, for I have lived for some years among people here, who are awful gamblers, and have never yet taken to the trade. But here comes the man with the sea water : we must step out, to see that it is taken care of, and give the messenger something to drink."

NOTES.

THE SOLAN GOOSE, PAGE 57.

The following communications may be of interest to naturalists :—

MY DEAR SIR,—On referring to “Yarrell’s Birds” for a confirmation of the statement regarding the solan goose, I did not find any allusion to the bird’s peculiar mode of hatching; and, as I have watched these birds pretty closely for years and have myself failed to notice the singular position of the foot, I thought it right to refer to the tacksman of the Bass, as the best possible authority. His reply is so much to the point, and is, at the same time, such a confirmation of the author’s remark, that I send you the letter.

CANTY BAY, *November 26, 1862.*

Sir—In reply to your note, the Solan Goose sits with one foot on the egg and takes one month to hatch; then it takes three months before the young can fly. Also, it disgorges its food while on the nest at the approach of strangers coming too near; then when left alone picks it up again. The Solan Goose egg is very good to eat. The Queen gets a dish every year and is very fond of them. Some people like the young ones to eat

and others do not, but there are different ways of cooking them.
Yours respectfully—GEORGE ADAMS.

It is somewhat strange, in a work of such a high reputation as Yarrell's, to find it stated on the authority of Selby that the gannets are so tame when sitting in their nests, as to "allow themselves to be stroked by the hand without resistance." Tame they certainly are, but woe betide the hand that ventures to touch them. I should not like to try it, as any time I have approached "the poultry yard," on the south-west face of the Bass, in the month of May; the old birds then shot most wicked glances from their sharp eyes, and snapped their long and strong beaks in a manner not to be mistaken; while a never-ending chorus of hoarse screams, something like Grog, Grog, issued from the throats of hundreds of angry and alarmed sitters. One day an unfortunate rabbit, chased by a terrier, threw himself upon the tender mercies of these birds. They made short work of him; he was killed, and passed from bill to bill in a twinkling.

Sir Robert Sibbald, in his "History of Fife" (1710), was, as far as I am aware, the first to notice the position of the foot; he says, "They put the sole of their foot upon it (the egg), and foment it so till the young one be hatched." A century later this was confirmed by Dr. Walker, Professor of Natural History in Edinburgh, who mentions the fact in his "Essays on Natural History," 1808. Dr. Fleming, the latest writer on the subject, appears to doubt the accuracy of the observation, and thinks it "probable that the gannet rests on the egg in the nest as other birds do; but in preparing to move, especially in retiring from an intruder, it does not hesitate to set its foot on the egg, and hence it has been imagined to embrace it always throughout the whole process of incubation." *

D. D.

* *The Bass Rock*, 8vo, Edin., 1847.

THE MINAUR, PAGES 293-298.

THE Sepia figured at page 297, is taken from Verany's "Mollusques Méditerranéens." I am not quite certain that it represents the animal known on the coast of Normandy as *The Minaur*, and described by the author, but it is more than probable that this formidable animal is the *Octopus vulgaris* or some mollusk nearly allied to it. The following description is taken from M. Verany's work.

"The common Pôulp is scattered throughout the Mediterranean, and is found on the coast of the Atlantic at the Canaries. According to facts collected by M. D'Orbigny, it has been met with at Hayti, Cuba, Bahia, the Isle of France, East Indies, and in the Red Sea. It is caught on the rugged shores of Liguria in all seasons, but more plentifully in summer. This cephalopod lives almost always amongst rocks, and generally hides itself in the holes and crevices, into which it penetrates with great ease, its body being very supple and elastic.

"It is in these recesses that he lies watching for the animals on which he lives. As soon as he perceives them, he cautiously leaves his den, darts like an arrow on his victim, which he wraps himself about, clasps in his serpent-like arms, and fixes by means of his suckers. When he darts on his prey, he starts with his body in front. When he comes near it he turns round, opens his arms, and fastens on it with such rapidity one has scarcely time to observe him.

"Sometimes he places himself upon a sandy ground at a short distance from rocks, and is careful to construct a hiding-place. For this purpose he brings together in the form of a circle a

“ quantity of pebbles which he carries by fixing them on his arms
“ by means of his suckers. Then, having formed a sort of crater,
“ he ensconces himself in it, and there waits patiently for some
“ fish or crab to pass, which he skilfully seizes. I have several
“ times had an opportunity of verifying this fact in the roadstead
“ of Villafranca.

“ In summer the young poulps also come to the pebbly shores,
“ and they are sometimes met with in muddy places, from which
“ they are taken by the trawl, together with numbers of eledon.
“ They are usually fished for with a line without a hook ; instead
“ of which is substituted a piece of dog-fish, a bit of a cuttle-fish,
“ a white fish, a bone, a piece of suet, or some attractive substance
“ weighted with a small stone. The boatman, holding a line in
“ each hand, draws them very slowly along the rocky bottom.
“ Scarcely does the poulp see them, but he darts upon the bait,
“ and rolls it up in his arms ; the fisher, feeling the resistance,
“ gently draws the line towards him, and finally brings it into a
“ little net with a wooden handle, which he holds with the
“ other hand, and catches him.

“ They are also caught with a small olive branch fixed at the
“ end of a rod, and fitted with a hook, which is drawn backwards
“ and forwards before the openings of the holes and crevices of
“ the rocks.

“ Some very large ones are caught by the fishermen with the
“ *leister*, or trident. When the young poulps spread themselves
“ in summer over the pebbly coasts, they are caught by means of
“ a line weighted with lead, and furnished with a cork fitted with
“ several hooks, covered with pieces of scarlet cloth twisted into
“ thongs, which are thrown out as far as possible, and afterwards
“ drawn in very gently. The poulp darts eagerly at it ; the
“ fisher, warned by the motion and the resistance, gives a sharp
“ jerk, and almost always hooks the fish, and draws it quickly out.

“ This fish furnishes at Nice an agreeable pastime for the fine

“ summer evenings. The poulps live for some time out of the
“ water; the fishermen are consequently obliged, in order not to
“ lose them, to kill them immediately. This they do by biting
“ their heads, or by sticking a knife into the big ones. The com-
“ mon poulp is much more plentiful in the market of Nice than
“ in that of Genoa. When it is young and little, it is a dainty
“ morsel. If it is of a middling size—weighing less than a pound
“ —its flesh, still tender, is much esteemed by the common
“ people; but if it is larger it decreases in value, because the
“ flesh is tough. Those who buy it take the precaution of ham-
“ mering it for some time with a stick, before cooking it; others,
“ especially the Greeks, are careful to drag it for some time upon
“ a stone, holding it by the opening in the body—and this pro-
“ bably to break the fibres of the flesh. The flesh has a peculiar
“ and rather marked taste, for which reason that of the cuttle-
“ fish, and especially of the common calamari, is preferred to it,
“ but it is more thought of than that of the eledon. At Naples
“ shell-fish merchants of St. Lucia sell it cooked; on the shores
“ of Liguria it is prepared in different ways.

“ The largest poulp that I have ever seen was about three
“ yards long, and weighed nearly half a cwt. A skilful and very
“ intelligent old fisherman came across it at the head of the jetty
“ in the harbour of Nice, seized it with his own hands, by lean-
“ ing over his boat, turned it inside out, and mastered it at last,
“ but not without a great deal of trouble.

“ Poulps of thirty pounds weight are not rare at Nice, and
“ those of twenty pounds are common. The action of the suckers
“ of the poulp upon the skin when they fasten on it, the
“ serpent-like movement of its arms, its muscular power, its hide-
“ ous aspect, have, I think, caused the misdeeds of this cephalopod
“ to be exaggerated, for it is stupid, and incapable of injuring any
“ one.”

If the Octopus taken by the old fisherman in Nice harbour

was not torpid, he must have been a very good-natured member of the family of which Madame le Moine's "ugly beast" was a formidable representative. In Beale's *History of the Sperm Whale* there is an anecdote shewing, on the authority of Sir Grenville Temple, what happened in the Mediterranean. "A Sardinian captain, bathing at Jerbeh, felt one of his feet in the grasp of one of these animals; on this, with his other foot he tried to disengage himself, but his limb was immediately seized by another of the monster's arms. He then, with his hands, endeavoured to free himself, but these also, in succession, were firmly grasped by the polypus, and the poor man was shortly after found drowned, with all his limbs strongly bound together by the twining arms of the fish; and it is extraordinary that when this happened the water was scarcely four feet in depth."* Another illustration is drawn from Mr. Beale's own experience. He says:— "While upon the Bonin Islands, searching for shells on the rocks, which had just been left by the receding sea-tide, I was much astonished at seeing at my feet a most extraordinary looking animal, crawling towards the surf, which had only just left it. I had never seen one like it under such circumstances before; it therefore appeared the more remarkable. It was creeping on its eight legs, which, from their soft and flexible nature, bent considerably under the weight of its body, so that it was lifted by the efforts of its tentacula only, a small distance from the rocks. It appeared much alarmed at seeing me, and made every effort to escape, while I was not much in the humour to endeavour to capture so ugly a customer, whose appearance excited a feeling of disgust, not unmingled with fear. I however endeavoured to prevent its career, by pressing on one of its legs with my foot, but although I made use of considerable force for that purpose, its strength was so great that it several times quickly liberated its member, in spite of all the efforts I

* *Beale's Natural History of the Sperm Whale*, London, 1839, p. 65.

“ could employ in this way on wet slippery rocks. I now laid
 “ hold of one of the tentacles with my hand, and held it firmly, so
 “ that the limb appeared as if it would be torn asunder by our
 “ united strength. I soon gave it a powerful jerk, wishing to dis-
 “ engage it from the rocks to which it clung so forcibly by its
 “ suckers, which it effectually resisted ; but the moment after,
 “ the apparently enraged animal lifted its head with its large
 “ eyes projecting from the middle of its body, and letting go its
 “ hold of the rocks, suddenly sprang upon my arm, which I had
 “ previously bared to my shoulder, for the purpose of thrusting it
 “ into holes in the rocks to discover shells, and clung with its
 “ suckers to it with great power, endeavouring to get its beak,
 “ which I could now see, between the roots of its arms, in a
 “ position to bite ! .

“ A sensation of horror pervaded my whole frame when I found
 “ this monstrous animal had affixed itself so firmly upon my arm.
 “ Its cold slimy grasp was extremely sickening, and I immediately
 “ called aloud to the captain, who was also searching for shells at
 “ some distance, to come and release me from my disgusting
 “ assailant—he quickly arrived, and taking me down to the boat,
 “ during which time I was employed in keeping the beak away
 “ from my hand, quickly released me by destroying my tormentor
 “ with the boat knife, when I disengaged it by portions at a time.
 “ This animal must have measured, across its expanded arms,
 “ about four feet, while its body was not larger than a large
 “ clenched hand. It was that species of sepia, which is called
 “ by whalers rock-squid.’ ” *

Not to go back to the fables and exaggerations of the old mariners regarding the Kraken—of which, by the way, a very good account is given in vol. ii. Blackwood's Magazine, in a paper written by the late James Wilson—there are various well-authenticated cases of large cuttle-fish having been seen. One of

* *Beale's Sperm Whale*, 8vo, Lond., pp. 67, 68.

the latest (1862) was communicated by Dr. Spence of Lerwick to Dr. Allman, Professor of Natural History in Edinburgh. The animal was thrown ashore somewhere on the Shetlands, its body measured 9 feet, and its arms were 16 feet in length. It is evident that a cuttle-fish of this size would be a dangerous adversary for an unarmed man, either in or out of the water.

The young cuttles, I am told, are frequently eaten on the Firth of Forth by the crews of the trawling sloops.

D. D.

EDINBURGH, *December 6, 1862.*

END OF VOL. I.

